

A seller of 'sing-songs' : a chapter in the foreign trade of China and Macao

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A SELLER OF 'SING-SONGS'

A Chapter in the Foreign Trade of China and Macao

J. M. BRAGA

The English East India Company
Obligatory Gifts to Mandarins
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FOR nearly two hundred years the Honourable East India Company of London was privileged to exercise against the subjects of His Britannic Majesty an exclusive trade monopoly in China, and it is interesting to observe that the little Portuguese city of Macao witnessed the evolution of a new and vital phase in the circumstances which led to the breaking up of that long enjoyed and profitable monopoly. In the change which developed there was evidence of a gradual surge in the feeling which grew, late in the 18th century in business circles in England, against privilege and franchises in trade. This idea gained momentum as the industries of Great Britain expanded while the protagonists of the Free Trade movement made their voices heard. At long last the English Company had to give up the business in China which it had conducted for such a long time, when the British Parliament refused in 1833 to renew its monopoly, and the office in China was closed down.

Much bitterness in China and Britain attended the disputes which took place while some of the subsequent incidents between Britain and China were most regrettable, but the modifications in the status of the trade began as only a little movement, started by a few individuals, by none more unlikely to succeed than the simple, apparently negligible business of a young English seller of 'Sing-Songs'.

It was only fifteen years after Vasco da Gama discovered the sea route to India that the Portuguese began trading regularly at the China coast and it was a trade which was virtually unchallenged by other Europeans for almost a century. The Japanese had already been proscribed from the China coast because of piracies carried out by freebooters from that country and, to keep the subjects of China from meeting them, the Chinese Government severely restricted the movements of its nationals abroad.¹

¹ *Chang-chou fu chih* 漳州府志 (ch. 31: 7), quoted in W. H. Chang 張維華, A Commentary on the Four Chapters on Portugal, Spain, Holland and Italy in the History of the Ming Dynasty

The coming of the Portuguese provided a convenient way out of the difficulty of keeping goods flowing between China and Japan, and although numbers of adventurous Chinese and Japanese smugglers flouted the regulations and considerable illicit trade flourished, the presence of these Westerners provided, for the Chinese mandarins, what seemed to be the logical, and for them even profitable, means for overcoming the legal impediments. The Westerners were suppressors of pirates; they were led to feel that they were welcome, at first by those among the Chinese who were prepared to traffic with these foreigners and then by Chinese officialdom, so that an arrangement was made, in the middle of the 16th century, which led to the founding of Macao. This tiny, but important, Portuguese outpost became the busy centre of part of the commerce between China and Japan and to some extent between China and places in *Nan Yang* 南洋, the 'Southern Seas'. Macao quickly grew in importance and its citizens prospered.²

The first of the rivals from Europe to appear were from the Netherlands, one of whose earliest incursions into the China seas, at the very beginning of the 17th century, was to pounce upon and capture a richly laden, unarmed and unmanned Portuguese trade ship lying at anchor in the port of Macao. In the eyes of the Chinese, as with anybody else, this was a flagrant case of piracy which branded them as corsairs, perpetrators of the most heinous forms of crime. Similar seizures of Chinese trading junks by the Dutch newcomers served to confirm this view.³

The English East India Company

At this juncture a combine of English merchants obtained from their sovereign a monopoly for trading to the East Indies, but attempts made by them to do business in Japan proved unprofitable and the venture was given

明史佛郎機呂宋和蘭意大里亞四傳注釋, in 燕京學報專號之七: *Yenching Journal of Chinese Studies*, Monograph Series No. 7, Peking (1934: 40); *China Review*, 19(1891): 50.

² The subject of the establishment and rapid growth of Macao has merited the attention of historians in recent years. Cf. C. A. Montalto de Jesus, *Historic Macao* (Hong Kong 1902, 2nd ed. Macao 1926); H. Cordier, *L'Arrivée des Portugais en Chine* (Leide 1911); H. Bernard, s.j., *Aux Portes de la Chine* (Tientsin 1933); Chang T'ien-tsè, *Sino-Portuguese Trade from 1514 to 1644* (Leyden 1934); A. Cortesão, *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires and the Book of Francisco Rodrigues* (London 1944); C. R. Boxer, *Macau na Época da Restauração* (Macao 1942), *Fidalgos in the Far East, 1550-1770* (The Hague 1948) and *South China in the Sixteenth Century* (London 1953); J. M. Braga, *The Western Pioneers and their Discovery of Macao* (Macao 1949) and *Hong Kong and Macao* (Hong Kong 1960).

³ It is quite likely that some Chinese capital was lost in the Macao ship, as Canton traders very possibly shipped goods on consignment apart from their outright sales to the Portuguese. Very little is known about the details of the trade between Macao and Japan, but see the recent book on the subject, Prof. C. R. Boxer's *The Great Ship from Amacan: Annals of Macao and the Old Japan Trade, 1555-1640* (Lisbon 1959) and the documents and works quoted therein. See also E. Lavissee and A. Rambaud, *Histoire Générale* (Paris 1895, Vol. 5: 904-9); N. D. Harris, *Europe and the East* (Boston 1926: 377).

up. In India, however, the Company set about the building up of an empire in no uncertain manner.⁴ King Charles I granted a monopoly to another English company, sometimes known as the Courteen Association, three of whose ships appeared at Macao in 1637. Not a little trouble accrued to Macao from these English vessels, for John Weddell, the commander, acted in complete disregard of the Chinese regulations, and the mandarins decided that Macao should be held responsible for the conduct of all Europeans. They imposed a fine of 80,000 taels (about £30,000) upon the Portuguese, as if the latter could have impeded the movements of these Englishmen!⁵ The Chinese officials even felt that all dealings with Europeans should be centred at Macao but this idea was found to be impracticable.

In due course a merger of the rival English companies took place; the subjugation of India was put in hand, in the face of French and Dutch rivalry; and the monopoly was maintained in China against British nationals who tried to infringe the privileges of its franchise. The Company, seeking to extend its trade, despatched ships from India to China, and the Chinese determined that all non-Portuguese foreign trade should be concentrated at Whampoa 黃浦. In this connection a Chinese official was stationed at Taipa 氹仔, the pair of little islands just south of the city of Macao. At this anchorage the mandarins would measure foreign ships for dues and provide Chinese pilots to take non-Portuguese ships to Whampoa, the port of Canton.⁶

At Canton residences were built by Chinese merchants privileged to trade with the foreigners and to these premises the foreign merchants were

⁴ Queen Elizabeth I incorporated the first English company by royal charter in 1600, conferring on *The Governor and Company of Merchants of London, trading to the East Indies* 'the sole right of trading with the East Indies, beyond the Cape of Good Hope'. King James I renewed the charter 'for ever' in 1609, and Cromwell confirmed it in 1657, while loans to the Crown in later times—such as £2,000,000 in 1698, £3,200,000 in 1708, £1,000,000 in 1742 and other occasions—served to strengthen the Company's position. It came to rule India and became a veritable *imperium in imperio*, being known as 'the Honourable East India Company'.

⁵ Nevertheless the English were convinced that the Portuguese had been responsible for the Chinese opposition and blamed them; the Englishmen were determined to carry on trade. As regards the activities of the English traders in Macao and South China in 1637 see *The Travels of Peter Mundy* (London 1919) edited by Sir Richard Temple for the Hakluyt Society, Vol. III (Part I: 158–275). The English vessels were under Capt. John Weddell, while Peter Mundy was the Purser. This English account of Macao and its people is a very interesting one. When, after forcing their way up the Pearl River, the English squadron left, the Portuguese suffered considerably from exactions demanded by the mandarins, Macao being penalized, as we have seen, for the misconduct of the English traders with a fine of 80,000 taels, an enormous sum by the standards of the time. (C. A. Montalto de Jesus, *Historic Macao*, Macao 1926: 111–115. Many documents bearing on this may be seen in the archives at Lisbon, some of which are quoted by Sir Richard Temple.)

⁶ Subsequently the measuring took place at Whampoa, but the ships going up the river continued to pick up their pilots at Taipa, until the middle of the 19th century. Early in the 20th century the little islands of Taipa were joined together by reclamations and now form the single Portuguese island of Taipa, no longer used as the depot for pilots.

assigned during the trading season, approximately from September to March, to quarters in the commodious buildings provided for them.

These were called the *Factories*. The property on which the buildings to accommodate the foreigners at Canton were erected was situated by the river, between the western suburbs of Canton city, lying about 600 feet from the south-west corner of the city wall and the north bank of the river. The front extended along the river bank for a thousand feet by about, at first, some three hundred feet in depth. Within this area thirteen sites were marked out, averaging about 100 feet in width (some of the sites were only 50 feet wide, several over 100 and one nearly 150 feet in width). On the land side Chinese shops and dwellings crowded upon the Factory area, and it was only by a succession of reclamations that the area was enlarged. In this way each plot was deepened to five hundred feet or more but the width remained unchanged. On each plot a succession of four, five or more buildings was erected, of brick and granite, two storeys high, 'very spacious and airy'. Probably of Eastern design, adapted to Western requirements, the premises were used for business on the ground floor with dwellings on the upper. In course of time further reclamations enabled the gardens in front of the Factories, at the river side, to be extended, but the frontage, facing the river, was always limited to the width of the site.⁷

The Chinese name for the Factories was 'Thirteen Hong', *Shih-san Hong* 十三行,⁸ for there were thirteen Factories, whose sites and their respective buildings were owned by the Chinese Hong merchants individually but rented to the foreigners. The Factories bore distinctive Chinese names but in course of time the foreigners gave them English names as well, and this explains how the Factory premises came to be known as: Danish, *Huang Ch'i* 黃旗 (Yellow Flag); Spanish, *Lu Sung* 呂宋 (Luzon); French, *Kao Kung* 高公 (High Public); *Chungqua* 中和 (later *Mingqua*), *Wan Yüan* 萬源 (Ten

⁷ The English adopted the term 'factory' from the Portuguese *feitoria*, a term first used by the Venetians and other Italians. Its use in the Far East to mean 'a place where factors or commercial agents transact business' can be traced to India when the Portuguese introduced this term as early as 1500, after which it was always used by them when referring to their trading stations as distinct from their cities.

Several interesting descriptions of the factories at Canton and the life enjoyed by the foreign traders have come down to us. See P. Osbeck, *A Voyage to China and the East Indies* (London 1771); W. Hickey, *Memoirs of William Hickey* (London 1919); W. H. Medhurst, *China: Its State and Prospects* (London 1838); W. C. Hunter, *The Fan-koae at Canton before the Treaty Days* (London 1882) and *Bits of Old China* (London 1885); K. Hillard, *My Mother's Journal: A Young Lady's Diary from 1829-1834* (Boston 1900); H. B. Morse, *The Trade and Administration of China* (London 1908); H. B. Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company trading to China, 1635-1834* (Oxford 1926-29).

⁸ In Chinese *hong* 行 means a row of business premises, being applied subsequently to each building. The term was also used to designate the Chinese merchants who traded with the foreigners at Canton. Later the name 'hong' became the appellation for any business firm. (S. Couling, *The Encyclopaedia Sinica*, Shanghai 1917: 235).

thousand Springs); *Kuang Yüan* 廣源 (Wide Springs), later American; Imperial (i.e. Austrian), *Ma Ying* 孖鷹 (Twin Eagles); *Pao Shun* 寶順 (Precious and Prosperous); Swedish, *Sui* 瑞 (the Chinese name for Sweden); Old English, *Lung Shun* 隆順 (Glorious Prosperity); 'Chow Chow' (i.e. mixed), *Fêng T'ai* 豐太 (Great and Affluent); New English, *Pao Ho* 保和 (Ensures Harmony); Dutch, *Chi I* 集義 (Assembled Righteousness); the Creek Factory, *I Ho* 義和 (Justice and Peace) (in Cantonese *E-wo*). The largest Hong was the New English Factory, with a total built-over area of about 75,000 sq.ft., but the Danish, *Chungqua* and Old English Factory were each over 50,000 sq.ft. in area.⁹

When, in later years, the foreign merchants increased in number accommodation was found for each firm in separate houses on each Factory site. All the buildings were rebuilt more than once, because of alterations and loss by fire. One fire gutted the Factories in 1822 when a conflagration which started in a part of Canton city spread to and destroyed the Factories. In 1843 the buildings were burned down by an anti-foreign mob and once more in 1856, when a mob again expressed its disapproval of the presence of foreigners in China, after Admiral Seymour had bombarded the city of Canton. In the later stages the designs of the buildings were decidedly Western, and after the fire of 1843 three-storied structures were erected on the old sites.¹⁰

At the end of each season the foreign supercargoes,¹¹ in common with all foreigners—excepting the Portuguese at Macao—had to embark in their ships and leave China until the next season, the times for the voyages being determined by the regular monsoon trade winds.¹²

⁹ In 1780 the English Company paid a rent of £700 a year; thirty years later it was £2,100 and by 1823, £10,000.

¹⁰ Quite a number of pictures of the Factories were painted from time to time by several artists, foreigners as well as Chinese using the Western medium. They give us a good idea of what the buildings looked like. The 'Ho Tung Collection', bequeathed to the Hong Kong Government by Sir Robert Ho Tung, contains several very fine paintings, including three showing the fire of 1822 (?). The Government has managed to buy quite a few more from other sources. 'The Chater Collection', also bequeathed to the Government before the War and lost during the Japanese occupation, was likewise rich in pictures of the Factories. Numerous reproductions of these may be seen in James Orange's *The Chater Collection: Pictures relating to China, Hongkong, Macao, 1655-1860* (London 1924); *Catalogue of Pictures relating to the China Coast known as the Law and Sayer Collections* (Hong Kong Government 1953); *The Ho Tung Collection of Pictures* (Hong Kong 1959). A picture from the Ho Tung Collection, greatly enlarged, is on display in the City Hall, Hong Kong.

¹¹ This word comes from the Portuguese *sobrecarga*, an officer in a merchant ship, whose duty it was to manage the cargo and superintend the commercial affairs of a ship. (C. de Figueiredo, *Novo Dicionário da Língua Portuguesa* (Lisboa [n.d.], Vol. II: 720). Many other words having to do with trade in the Far East come from the Portuguese interpreters.

¹² The Portuguese pioneers had, in earlier times, followed the advice of the native mariners in the matter of sailing seasons.

The English Company would have liked to prevent other European ships from trading to China, but no action could be taken against Dutch, French and other European vessels, save during a state of war. The Company did manage to exercise its prerogatives, however, against all British subjects, and 'the insatiate desire of English merchants outside the Company's ring was checked in 1693 when the Company's charter had been renewed'. The Company justified itself in this policy because of the sums expended annually, among other things, on the purchase of costly presents for Chinese ranking officials.¹³

The volume of the trade at Canton grew and the Chinese mandarins, by setting up a sort of a guild which came to be known as the *Co-Hong*, compelled all foreign trade there to be channelled through a few Chinese who had the privilege to be members of this organization. By means of the *Co-Hong* the Chinese officials created a virtual monopoly in Canton, especially in the important items of trade, whereby the mandarins collected substantial perquisites from the Chinese merchants, also known as Hong merchants, who had bought their way into it, besides the sums they levied on the trade itself. Only the really important items of merchandise were restricted to the members of the *Co-Hong*, however, and there was an active though modest traffic in quite a number of articles with Chinese traders who were not among those privileged to join the *Co-Hong*.¹⁴

Through this system the foreigners paid more for Chinese merchandise than if they had been permitted to trade freely and received less for their imports than if there had been an unrestricted market. As the volume of the trade grew so also grew the rapacity of Chinese officialdom, for the

¹³ H. B. Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company trading to China, 1635-1834* (Oxford 1926, Vol. I: 161, 177, 181, 182 *passim*); M. Greenberg, *British Trade and the Opening of China, 1800-42* (Cambridge University Press, 1951: 22-23); J. M. Braga, *Hong Kong and Macao* (Hong Kong 1960: 41-2), to mention three among many books touching upon the subject.

¹⁴ Yule and Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, London, 1903, p. 422, believe, though speaking with diffidence, that the word *Co-Hong* was 'an exogamous union between the Latin *Co-* and the Chinese *Hong*'. First formally established in 1720 it was an association of Chinese merchants given the exclusive right to trade with the foreign merchants in Canton. It was dissolved in 1771 but reconstituted soon afterwards with twelve members, later increased to thirteen. They had many privileges, but obligations rendered them particularly vulnerable to the merciless extortions of the mandarins. It was not until the Treaty of Nanking (1842) was signed that the *Co-Hong* system was abolished and free trade inaugurated. The Chinese name for this association was *Kung Hang* 公行 (in Mandarin, but in Cantonese *Kung Hong*) whence the foreign corruption of *Co-Hong*. See also E. H. Pritchard, *Crucial Years of Early Anglo-Chinese Relations* (Washington 1937) and *Anglo-Chinese Relations* (Urbana, Ill., 1929); H. B. Morse, *International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. I (London 1910); S. Wells Williams, *The Middle Kingdom* (New York 1883); J. B. Eames, *The English in China, 1600-1843* (London 1909); H. Cordier, *Histoire générale de la Chine et de ses relations avec les pays étrangers*, Vol. III (Paris 1920); W. C. Hunter, *The 'Fan Kwae' at Canton* (London 1882); T. R. Jernigan, *China in Law and Commerce* (New York 1905). For a recent Chinese view see Li Chien-nung, *The Political History of China, 1840-1928* (Princeton, N.J., 1956: 13 ff).

bureaucratic system of China's administration gave ample scope for the mandarins to exploit their positions. An appointment to Canton had become one of the most prized plums in the administrative service of the Chinese Empire.¹⁵

Obligatory Gifts to Mandarins

Besides the sums extorted from the Chinese members of the *Co-Hong*, and even small traders, the mandarins saw to it that the practice became firmly established whereby obligatory presents had to be given, principally at Chinese New Year but also on other occasions. Furthermore the officials at Canton, who owed their appointments to the senior officials in Peking, were expected not only to purchase, which they did from the Chinese merchants at prices ruinously low to the sellers, valuable clocks and watches for the Emperor and the principal ministers, but were compelled to give presents as well. These articles became, thus, 'a means of corruption between the Canton officials and their superiors in the capital'.

Among these gifts the most favoured were costly curiosities in gold or silver, made in Europe, generally artistically enamelled and set with precious stones, like clocks and watches of the most intricate kind (the watches often in pairs), and artfully fashioned articles such as gem-studded snuff-boxes and automata in the form of music boxes, as well as 'jewelled birds which sang when the lid opened', among other things. These articles made by skilled craftsmen, in Switzerland, Paris and elsewhere and to some extent in Birmingham, were often expensive objects, said to 'amuse the Mandarins in Canton and Peking, and were given by the Chinese Hong merchants as obligatory New Year presents to the Government officials'.¹⁶

The idea of making these gifts of watches or clocks was started by the Portuguese early in the 16th century, and Father Ruggieri, the first missionary from Macao permitted to reside in China, showed some of these articles to

¹⁵ The Portuguese archives abound in documents dealing with the exactions and extortions of the mandarins over the years. See A. F. Marques Pereira, *As Alfandegas Chinesas de Macau* (Macao 1870); Bento da França, *Subsidios para a Historia de Macau* (Lisboa 1888); Eudore de Colombar, *Histoire Abrégée de Macao* (Pékin 1928); C. A. Montalto de Jesus, *Historic Macao* (Macao 1926); *Arquivos de Macau* (Macao 3 vols, 1929-1930), etc. Other Foreign writers have also touched upon this, among them: E. H. Parker, *China, her History, Diplomacy and Commerce* (London 1917: 207-9); A. Krausse, *China in Decay* (London 1900: 57-69); E. H. Pritchard, *Anglo-Chinese Relations* (Urbana, Ill., 1929: 19, 118-19, 220); S. Wells Williams, *The Middle Kingdom* (New York 1883, Vol. I: 294-95); R. Montgomery Martin, *China: Political, Commercial and Social* (London 1847, Vol. I: 129-30).

¹⁶ Lord Macartney, in his diary, refers to 'the numerous and magnificent presents which the Hong merchants make to the superior Mandarins at Canton who, in their turn, send a part of these presents to the Emperor and his ministers and favourites at Peking'. See J. L. Cranmer-Byng, *An Embassy to China: Being the Journal kept by Lord Macartney during his embassy to the Emperor Ch'ien-lung, 1793-1794* (London 1962: 261). See also M. Greenberg, *British Trade and the Opening of China 1800-42* (Cambridge University Press, 1951: 22); J. Cox, *A descriptive Inventory of Several Exquisite and Magnificent Pieces of Mechanism and Jewellery* (London 1773).

the mandarins at Chao-ch'ing 肇慶, then the seat of the Viceroyalty of Kwangtung 廣東 and Kwangsi 廣西. A few years later Father Ricci gave some of these as presents to the Emperor himself at Peking.¹⁷ They set the pattern for presents to the Emperor and Chinese officials by the envoys of various nations to China. In a few cases they were purchased by merchants or missionaries from the Portuguese dealers at Macao, to present to officials at Canton and elsewhere in China.

Besides importing these articles the priests took to making clocks, also smaller time-pieces and various automata and other contrivances—mechanical figures of persons and animals, even a lion and a tiger. Among the men who constructed these in China were the Portuguese Fathers Gabriel de Magalhães (†1677) and Tomás Pereira (†1708), the Swiss Brother Coadjutor Jacques Brocard (†1718), the French Fathers Gilles Thébault (†1766), Michel Benoist (†1774), Nicolas-Marie Roy (†1769), Hubert de Méricourt (†1774), Jean-Matthieu de Ventavon (†1787), the Moravian Father Charles Slaviczek (†1735) and the Austrian Brother Coadjutor François-Louis Stadlin (†1790), to mention the most important. All these were Jesuits, members of the Portuguese and French Missions in China.¹⁸

At Macao and Canton, too, the manufacture of watches and clocks on a restricted scale came to be carried on, Chinese artisans being trained for the purpose. These timepieces, inferior in quality to the originals imported from Europe, served as presents for the less important mandarins and contributed to reduce the profits made on the imported articles.¹⁹

Describing these wares, two Chinese mandarins Cheung Yu-lam 張汝霖 and Yan Kwong-yam 印光任, in the middle of the 18th century gave a short description of clocks and watches which they had seen in Macao.²⁰ It has been stated that by the end of the 18th century clocks in China numbered several thousands, many of them from Europe, including quite a few extremely

¹⁷ Pasquale D'Elia, s.j., *Fonti Ricciane. Documenti originali concernenti Matteo Ricci e la storia delle prime relazioni tra l'Europa e la Cina. 1579-1615* (Roma 1942-49, Vol. I: 166; Vol. II: 91, 99-100, 123-126).

¹⁸ Louis Pfister, s.j., *Notices Biographiques et Bibliographiques sur les Jésuites de l'ancienne Mission de Chine* (Chang-hai 1932: 251-256, 381-386, 592-593, 793, 813-820, 872-877, 974, 913-920, 655-657 and 619-620 *passim*).

¹⁹ J. Needham, Wang Ling and D. J. S. Price, *Heavenly Clockwork* (Cambridge 1960), where it is stated that 'the full history of this interesting alliance of technology and religion has never been written, but Pélissier, L'Horlogerie en Chine (essay-review of A. Chapuis, Loup & de Saussure, *La Montre Chinoise*), started a sketch of it' (*T'oung Pao*, 20, 1920: 61).

The same authors mention that 'in 1809 a Shanghai man, Hsü Ch'ao-chün, 徐朝俊 said in the preface to *Tzu Ming Chung Piao T'u Fa* 自鳴鐘表圖法 (an illustrated treatise) that he came of a family which had been making "European" clocks for five generations' (*Heavenly Clockwork*: 153-154).

²⁰ *Ou-mun kei-leok* 澳門記略. *Monografia de Macau, por Tcheong-Ü-Lam* 張汝霖, e *Iâm-Kuóng-Iâm* 印光任. Tradução de chinês por Luis G. Gomes (Macao 1950: 206-7).

valuable pieces, set with precious stones and richly enamelled; but large numbers, of comparatively inferior quality, were made in China.²¹

Trading in 'Sing-Songs'

This traffic in clocks and watches was encouraged by Emperor K'ang-hsi who ordered a regular purchase of these articles for distribution among those of his Court whom he wished to honour. His grandson, Emperor Ch'ien-lung, proved to be an even more enthusiastic patron, for he gave instructions for the annual purchase of clocks and watches of the best kinds to the value of 30,000 to 60,000 taels (£12,000—£25,000). Thus by the middle of the 18th century the English East India Company was buying these articles, in London, for the value of £20,000 and more each year, to send to Canton.²² In the pidgin-English jargon used in Canton between the foreign traders and their Chinese counterparts, these objects were generally called 'sing-songs' because so many of them were fitted with musical boxes which played pleasant tunes.²³

The leading London suppliers of 'sing-songs' were the watchmakers Francis Magniac and Charles Cabrier (both of Swiss descent), the former established at Clerkenwell (England), as well as James Cox, of Shoe Lane, London, who bought from Geneva, and Edward Ellicott, who carried on business 'under the Royal Exchange', London.²⁴ The European craftsmen who created these articles—some of which were extremely valuable—showed considerable skill in their work, vying with one another in turning out the most ingenious and intricate objects.

²¹ This subject of the introduction and the popularization of clocks and watches in China has also been very ably discussed in an excellent and carefully documented article by Dr Georges Bonnant, 'The Introduction of Western Horology in China', in *La Suisse Horlogère* (International Edition, La Chaux-de-Fonds, 1960: 28-38).

²² Georges Bonnant, *op. cit.* (in note 21): 9-10. By the beginning of the 19th century, after a slackening for a few years late in the 18th century, the volume grew to well over £40,000 a year, a fabulously large sum to be spent on these articles (see p. 80 *infra*). When Lord Macartney visited China, as H.B.M. Ambassador in 1793-94, he commented: 'By what I saw at Jehol and Yüan-ming Yüan, and by the reports concerning the things I did not see (particularly in the ladies' apartments, and the European palace, which latter is entirely furnished and enriched with articles from Europe) I am led to believe what I have been assured of, that the Emperor possesses to the value of two millions sterling at the least in various toys, jewellery, glass, musical automations, and other figures, instruments of different kinds, microcosms, clocks, watches, etc., etc., all made in London' (J. L. Cranmer-Byng, *An Embassy to China*, 1962: 261).

²³ *Tzu-ming-chung* 自鳴鐘 (*tse ming tsung* in Cantonese), literally, 'Self-singing clock'. This peculiar term was the nomenclature at the Chinese coast for the trade in clocks, watches and mechanical toys such as snuff-boxes containing jewelled birds which sang when the lid was opened. Needham, Wang and Price, *Heavenly Clockwork* (1960: 150).

²⁴ This is the only reference to Charles Cabrier known to the present writer. A short reference to the articles of this trade is to be found in J. Cox, *A Descriptive Inventory of several Exquisite and Magnificent Pieces of Mechanism and Jewellery* (London 1773). See also S. Harcourt-Smith, *A Catalogue of Various Clocks, Watches, Automata and other miscellaneous objects of European*

The most costly 'sing-songs' were shipped from London by the English East India Company to their office at Canton; but besides the Company some of the business in these articles, obviously the less expensive ones, was in the hands of the officers and supercargoes of the English ships; even the sailors did well in this trade.²⁵ These valuable articles were small and did not interfere with the cargo space of the ships. In China the men exchanged their wares for Chinese goods like articles of porcelain, screens, lacquered products and fans, chests and paintings, embroidered shawls and tapestries, ivories and carved jades and other stones, for most of which buyers could be found in Europe. The greater part of this private trade was carried on at Canton but some restricted business was done at Whampoa and Macao. In many cases the purveyors of the articles were acting on behalf of European principals but some must have done business for their own account.²⁶

The English engaged in this trade often complained that the Chinese got the better of the bargaining, but it continued without interruption. When the business by the officers and men interfered with the Company's trade in the 'sing-songs' the Directors ordered its suspension, but these orders remained a dead letter.²⁷

'We realise', Dr Georges Bonnant explains, 'that the Far East, ever since the 16th century, has been an interesting market for western horology.

workmanship, dating from the 18th and early 19th Centuries, in the Palace Museum and Wu Ying Tien, Peking (Palace Museum, Peiping 1933); M. Planchon, L'Horloge: son histoire retrospective, pittoresque et artistique (Paris 1899); H. Michel, A propos des premières montres: over de eerste Horloges ('Technica', Bruxelles 1956); G. H. Baillie, Clocks and Watches; an historical bibliography (London 1951) and other books and articles apud Needham, Wang and Price, Heavenly Clockwork. See also H. Alan Lloyd, English Clocks for the Chinese Market, The Antique Collector (January-February, 1951) and R. K. Foulkes, The Ellicotts, a Family of Clockmakers, Antiquarian Horology (3[4 September], 1960) apud J. L. Cranmer-Byng, An Embassy to China, (1962: 355).

²⁵ It does not appear that other Europeans did a great deal of the business in 'sing-songs'.

²⁶ Nothing seems to have been recorded in the Portuguese archives about this branch of the private trade in China, and there are only casual references to it in H. B. Morse's *The Chronicles of the East India Company trading to China, 1635-1834* (Oxford 1926-1929: 5 volumes). An interesting reference to the trade is mentioned by George Thomas Staunton, then 12 years old, who accompanied Lord Macartney to Peking as a page. In a journal kept by him he mentions a visit made to the business premises, in the Factories at Canton, of Captain William Mackintosh, who, as the skipper of the East Indiaman *Hindustani* was permitted to enjoy the Company's 'privilege trade'. He recorded: 'This evening we went to see some curious machines in clock-work at Captain Mackintosh's factory. One among the others was particularly curious being a beautiful pyramid with golden serpents continually twirling up it and four dragons at its base spitting pearls and round it continually walking an elephant who at the same time moves both his trunk and tail' (J. L. Cranmer-Byng, *An Embassy to China*, 1962: 312, quoting Staunton's MS. *Journal* in the Library of Duke University, North Carolina).

²⁷ Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company* (Oxford 1929, Vol. V: 71 and 154). Considering that the Chinese merchants at Canton were compelled to sell 'sing-songs' to the mandarins at prices far below their real worth it is not surprising that they tried to acquire them at bargain prices.

Until the 19th century, watches and clocks were, above all, intended as gifts brought by the missionaries and European ambassadors or sold on the spot by merchants, in order to enrich the collections of sovereigns, princes or local high dignitaries. Clocks and watches performed no practical service yet, for the Orientals had not the same horary system as we had and, moreover, the reliability of the western timekeepers suffered from the climate and the lack of qualified repairers. This being the case, the demand was rather for luxury articles intended to dazzle, amaze and divert'.²⁸

In an interesting passage, Needham, Wang and Price give us an idea of one of the more elaborate of the pieces of 'sing-song' sent to China:

Certain descriptive catalogues and inventories give us a glimpse of the kind of apparatus which was then being made for the Chinese market. James Cox was a clock-maker and jeweller who was deeply engaged in the trade and his catalogues described a remarkable 'Chronoscope', the fellow piece of one which had been sent in the 'Triton' Indiaman to Canton in 1769, and which 'now adorns the palace of the Emperor of China'. The apparatus, 16 ft. in height, was of course made in gold studded with gems, but its interest lies in the extent to which it embodied features characteristic of the medieval clocks of China and Islam. Besides a mechanised armillary sphere and celestial globe, there were jack figures which struck bells at the hours and quarters, flying dragons which dropped (real) pearls into the mouths of other creatures waiting to receive them, and an elephant which paraded on a horizontal wheel waving its trunk and tail. Some of the clock casing was of 'crystal', permitting a view of the works, and one dial registered quarter-seconds.²⁹

Residence at Macao

By the middle of the 18th century Chinese officialdom had set the pattern, after a number of modifications, whereby trade should be carried on at Canton. With its growth—it had more than doubled from 1720 to 1756³⁰—the exactions and demands of the mandarins also increased. The English had made efforts to find openings for their ships in other Chinese ports, but the authorities at Canton countered this by obtaining from the Emperor, in 1757, an edict which tightened the conditions governing the trade with the Europeans. This was followed by another edict, in 1760, which forbade trade at any Chinese port except Canton, and which imposed even stricter controls over the foreigners in China.³¹ H. B. Morse has summarized the terms of this edict and the restrictions enforced at the time:

²⁸ Georges Bonnant, *op. cit.* (Note 21) 1962 reprint, p.7. Most of the 'sing-songs' in the Peking Palaces have disappeared: pilfered by eunuchs or smashed and lost in the looting of Peking during the Boxer troubles in 1900.

²⁹ *Heavenly Clockwork* (1960: 152).

³⁰ See the tables in Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. V; J. Macgregor, *Commercial Statistics* (London 1850, Vol. V: 404-6). Imports, including coin and bullion had increased, with fluctuations, from £222,476 to £531,939.

³¹ These regulations were printed in full in *The Canton Register* of July 15, 1831. See J. B. Eames, *The English in China, 1600-1843* (London 1909: 89-90); Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 56-57; Vol. V: 89-90; 94-98.

1. Foreigners were to trade and lodge with Hong merchants, at Canton, only.
2. When the trading was ended and the ships despatched for Europe the foreigners must go to Macao.
3. Hong merchants were to settle all their accounts justly by the time of the departure of the ships, and were under all circumstances to finish their accounts and affairs before the return of the ships.
4. Hong merchants were to be held responsible for the wrong doings of foreigners to whom they had rented quarters in the Hong to serve as factories, while other Chinese were not to build houses for rent to the Europeans.
5. In the future foreigners were not to have Chinese servants except the 'established' linguists and compradores.
6. Chinese were forbidden to borrow money from foreigners on pain of severe punishment and confiscation of property.
7. Foreigners were not to employ couriers to carry letters into the interior or to ascertain prices of commodities except with the advice and consent of the officials.
8. Additional troops under a mandarin of war were to be charged with the special duty of looking after the European ships and maintaining order.³²

This was an important development in the arrangements for the residence of foreign merchants in China when Chinese officialdom suddenly determined that Macao could be used by non-Portuguese foreigners, as a 'convenient place of Residence from whence you may pass and repass'. Before this, when the loading of the ships had been completed the supercargoes were not permitted to remain at Canton, but had to leave in their ships and return to their own countries. The new instructions observed that 'as there is a regular time for the ships, depending on the monsoon, there will be a fixed time for the supercargoes, if any business is unfinished or accounts unsettled, they may go to Macao and remain there, and not suffer the inconvenience of having to go to Europe'.³³

The change in the old arrangements now mooted by the Chinese officials represented a complete *volte-face* from the earlier attitude. As recently as 1750, reiterating previous orders, the Canton authorities had sent a note to Macao reminding the Portuguese not to permit any foreigner to live at Macao,

³² As a matter of fact articles 3, 5 and 6 were not strictly enforced; they were practically a dead letter. H. B. Morse, *The Trade and Administration of China* (New York 1921: 183-4).

³³ H. B. Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company*, Vol. V: 77.

in accordance with earlier injunctions to this effect.³⁴ For a long time, the foreigners at Canton had eyed Macao with much longing and now, at last, it seems that they would have their wish.³⁵

But however keen the Chinese at Canton might have been to oblige the foreign merchants this was more easily said than done, for the laws of Portugal expressly forbade the residence of foreigners in any Portuguese possession without a licence issued by the government in Lisbon.

As recently as March 9, 1746, a Royal Order had been sent from Goa to the Governor of Macao reminding him that, contrary to earlier standing prohibitions, ships belonging to foreigners had been trading at Macao and foreigners had been living in the City of Macao. The document stressed that the laws should be kept, as failure of their observance meant that 'serious losses would be suffered by His Majesty's Portuguese vassals not to mention other inconveniences of dangerous consequence to public order'.

To guard against such a state of affairs His Majesty 'ordered the exact observance of the aforementioned prohibitions, excepting only missionaries who had obtained the King's permission to carry on missionary work in the Portuguese Empire'. No other foreigner, the order went on to state, is permitted to establish himself in this City on any pretext whatsoever:

Proceedings should be taken against any person who tries to infringe the royal orders and if, after due notification, he does not leave within a reasonable period he shall be expelled. In the same way no foreign ship may enter the port, excepting in case of emergency which must be properly verified. If good cause is shown such ship may enjoy the privileges of hospitality and, after obtaining all that which may be needed within a reasonable limit of time, the said ship must then leave the port. While in port, the vessel shall be placed under surveillance so as to prevent trading with persons residing in the city of Macao, failing which the penalty incurred shall be not only the impounding and confiscation of the merchandise and goods to be found on board, but all other penalties that may be necessary so as to prevent all contraband trade.

Only ships from Manila would be excepted from this regulation and would be permitted the use of the port to trade, unless orders to the contrary should be issued by the King.³⁶ The document concluded by ordering the

³⁴ See document, dated April 2, 1750 (not yet indexed when examined in 1952 by the present writer), in the Arquivo Historico Ultramarino, Lisbon.

³⁵ One wonders if the change had not been accomplished by some sort of payment to the corrupt mandarin.

³⁶ Regular trade between Macao and Manila began almost immediately after the establishment of Manila (1571), the Spaniards buying silk and offering South American silver in payment. During the Spanish domination of Portugal (1580-1640), this trade was prohibited by the Spanish Crown but it flourished none the less. After the Portuguese threw off Spanish rule (1640-1668) trade stopped but when peace was restored commercial relations were soon reestablished and were 'either authorised or tolerated by both Crowns'. Macao found Manila a useful source for silver when Japan was closed to the Portuguese in 1639. The Spaniards bought silk, porcelain and other Chinese products from Macao, although a brisk trade was carried on by Chinese merchants between Fukien and Manila. (This subject has not received serious study yet, but see C. R. Boxer, *Portuguese and Spanish Rivalry in the Far East during the 17th century*, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, London, December 1946 and April 1947: 150-164 and 91-105.)

Governor 'to register this order in the Secretariat of the Government and to transmit a copy to the Senate of the City for the same to be registered in its records'.³⁷

A change such as the Chinese proposed must have been due to some modification in the Portuguese attitude. As a matter of fact this did happen to be the case, but it was not as easy as the mandarins seemed to think. The modification took place when the Council of Goa decided on April 22, 1757 to inform the Governor of Macao 'not to admit any foreigner without express permission from the Portuguese viceroy'. Although it was not exactly a reversal of earlier orders this was a new approach to the subject, and it did show that the viceregal court at Goa might be prepared to consider special cases.³⁸

The principal effect of the new ruling issued by the Viceroy of Portuguese India was interpreted to mean that Portuguese merchants at Macao might, with the approval of the Portuguese authorities, 'engage' foreigners, ostensibly as their employees. Every foreigner seeking to reside at Macao had thus to find a Portuguese sponsor. This enabled Macao houseowners, at a time when the little settlement had been feeling for a long time the pinch of a trade slump, to rent their houses, some of which were fine edifices, survivals of Macao's earlier, more prosperous days.

Among the first to make arrangements to live at Macao under the new conditions were Capt. Robert Jackson, Mr George Smith and Mr John Spencer, who had been able in 1761 to remain in China and Macao the year round, without the English East India Company's licence. The Company's Resident Select Committee at Canton however sent an identical letter to these three gentlemen:

Agreeable to our instructions from the Hon^{ble} the East India Company, we hereby inform you that it is their positive orders that no subject of great Britain shall remain in China the Year round without their leave or orders for so doing but that they proceed by the first conveyance to the parts of India from whence they came and also that they have given the

³⁷ 'Carta Regia ao Gov.^{or} e Cap.^m Geral desta Cidade sobre a admissão, commercio, e domicilio dos Extrangeiros em Macau', in *Livro das Ordens Regias do Leal Senado*, ff. 48-49. This order had been preceded by two royal orders issued in 1742, prohibiting the admission of foreign businessmen and foreign ships (*cf. Register No. 50*, of the Macao Senate, ff. 178v.-181), and by other instructions subsequently issued in the same strain: *Ordem Regia* dated May 9, 1746 and yet another on May 18, 1747 (see *Macao Senate Register No. 52*, ff. 18-18v.).

³⁸ See document dated April 22, 1757, Codex 1803-06, in the Arquivo Historico Ultramarino, Lisbon. It is clear from this that foreigners were not permitted to set up homes in Macao until the middle of the 18th century, but Macao had never closed its doors to refugees, hospitality being extended to them in spite of the laws which forbade this. The first British refugees arrived early in the 17th century after the shipwreck of the *Unicorn* off the coast of South China in 1620. The first Briton to visit Macao might have been William Carmichael, some twenty years earlier. (J. B. Eames, *The English in China*, London 1909: 14; Sir William Foster, *The English Factories in India, 1618-21*, London 1906: 266 n; *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*, Vol. III, Part 1, London 1919: 142.)

necessary orders to their several Presidencies not to suffer any Persons to proceed to Canton with a view of staying any longer than the departure of the Shipping from thence. If however any Person who is now resident at Canton shall make it appear to us that it is detrimental to his Affairs in going so soon in such case You are allow'd to stay till the next season and no longer on pain of their resentment as the Law shall empower them.³⁹

Capt. Jackson and John Spencer decided to leave but George Smith managed to find excuses to remain and by so doing he continued to be a thorn in the English Company's side for a quarter of a century.⁴⁰

Capt. Jackson proceeded to India and then to Goa where he managed to make arrangements for himself to be naturalized as a Portuguese subject. He turned up at Macao, sponsored by Mr João de Carvalho, who had arrived from Calcutta not long before, and was able to set up a home. Mr Carvalho, in common with several Portuguese and Goans at the time, had engaged in business in Bengal and elsewhere on the eastern coast of India during the trade expansion which took place during the middle of the 18th century. When conditions for trade with China showed some promise a few of these gentlemen made their way to Macao, one or two at a time, and when, in later years, business grew to substantial proportions, a number of them prospered.⁴¹

The records of the Macao Senate shed further light on the new situation for a 'Letter written by the Governor and Captain General [of Macao], José Placido de Matos Saraiva', sent to the Senate, may be seen. It states that 'the Englishman Roberto Jacson [i.e., Jackson] now residing at Macao has been naturalized in the City by special permission given by the Viceroy of India'. Dated November 16, 1764 the letter from Goa went on to remind the authorities at Macao that it did not include 'permission given for the unloading of

³⁹ H. B. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. V: 102-103.

⁴⁰ George Smith completely ignored the Company's repeated demands for him to leave, claiming that he was a representative of English merchants in India trying to collect money owed to them by Chinese merchants. He did so well in China and Macao that it suited his purpose to remain, although he did go to India frequently only to make his way back to China in a private ship in the following year. It was only when he was involved in a brush with Chinese officialdom in 1784, over the accidental killing of a Chinese boatman, when the *Lady Hughes*, of which he was supercargo, fired a salute, which led to his detention and subsequent release only when the gunner was handed over and executed, that he decided to retire from the coast of China. (H. B. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 99-106; H. B. Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. I, chap. V: 33-42; E. H. Pritchard, *The Crucial Years of Early Anglo-Chinese Relations, 1750-1800*, Washington 1937.)

⁴¹ Prominent among those who did well at Macao, at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century, were Bartholomeu Barretto, Januário Agostinho de Almeida, Domingos José Gomes, António dos Remedios, Antonio Goularte la Silveira, Manuel Pereira, Domingos Pio Marques, José Gomes Brandão, Francisco José de Paiva, Justiniano Vieira Ribeiro, Inacio Baptista Cortela, etc., and, a couple of generations later, men like Joaquim José Veiga, Manuel Gonçalves da Silva, Manuel de Figueiredo, Bernardo Estevão Carneiro, Claudio Inacio da Silva and others.

The subject of the trade between Bengal and Macao has yet to be studied. Casual references are to be found in J. J. Campos, *The Portuguese in Bengal* (Calcutta 1919).

Opium from foreign ships at Macao'. The Senate replied to the Governor on November 24, 1764, pointing out that 'the said Englishman should have presented the Portuguese Viceroy's order to the Senate for registration, inasmuch as this special concession has not been granted to any one up to the present, by reason of the fact that in these Archives there are standing instructions to the contrary, which have not been revoked'.⁴²

The surviving archives at Macao do not seem to make any mention of George Smith.⁴³

Among the next to take advantage of the concession granted by the Viceroy of Portuguese India was M. François Vauquelin, the Agent in China of the French East India Company; he succeeded in getting permission in 1765.⁴⁴ The members of the Select Committee at Canton of the English East India Company also tried to get the same permission but they succeeded only seven years later (in 1772). They then rented the stately mansion of Mr António José da Costa, at the Praia Grande, together with a fine residence within a very spacious garden at Rua de San Lourenço, for which they paid a rental of four hundred and fifty patacas a year, a handsome rental by the standards of the time.⁴⁵ Later, the East India Companies of other countries: the Netherlands, Prussia, Sweden and the Austrian Netherlands did the same thing. In course of time the representatives of these companies assumed some of the trappings of what came to be somewhat like those of a consular service.⁴⁶

The 'Country Merchants' at Macao

A new line of business thus came to be built up. At Canton the foreign merchants were limited to trading during six months each year; at Macao they could transact business, if they so desired, throughout the year. The ships

⁴² *Register No. 68* of the Macao Senate, ff. 340-340v. The present writer expresses his indebtedness to Father Benjamin Videira Pires, S.J., for searching the Macao archives for this information and several other transcriptions in the present article.

⁴³ The Macao records are far from complete; quite a number of the old codices and papers have disappeared, having succumbed to the action of bookworms and the effects of the humid climate.

⁴⁴ The French East India Company (*La Compagnie des Indes Orientales*) was a semi-governmental organization and the Agent had the status therefore almost of that of a consular representative. Once other foreigners were allowed residence at Macao permission could not be easily withheld in his case.

⁴⁵ H. B. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. V: 172, 173, etc. The present-day equivalent might be well over \$12,000. The surviving Macao archives do not contain any mention of the authorization granted to the English Company, but the fact that correspondence was exchanged with them in subsequent years shows that an arrangement had been entered into, and the mere fact that they lived in Macao is proof of acquiescence by the Portuguese. António José da Costa was a prominent citizen who was appointed Governor of Macao in 1780. He died a year later before completing his term of office.

⁴⁶ The Macao archives seem to be silent about the permission given to the representatives of the various Western governments and their East India Companies to install themselves at Macao.

carrying the goods were confined to the sailings dependent on the monsoons, but with the merchandise stored in godowns at Macao the volume of this business could be spread out over twelve months, and it expanded gradually. The senior members of the English East India Company would probably have scorned to trade at Macao; not so the East India Companies of other nations, the private merchants and even some of the English Company's juniors.

A working arrangement was established whereby Portuguese merchants at Macao, by co-operating with their foreign friends and acting as their sureties with the Portuguese authorities, helped to build up business at Macao whereby both sides benefited, although it is generally believed at Macao that the share allotted to the Portuguese was always relatively small. In the course of this business transactions followed in which links were established between Macao merchants and British, Indian, Parsi, Armenian and Goan merchants in Eastern India, at such places as Calcutta, Madras, Chandanagore, Pondicherry, etc. The English E. I. Company called these traders in India 'Country merchants', and their ships 'Country ships'.⁴⁷

By making use of Macao and Portuguese sponsors in this little place, the 'interlopers', as the Company also called them, met with considerable success, for quite a number of people in India were able thus to carry on a brisk private trade, and an arrangement resulted which proved profitable in a three-cornered way. The Macao authorities also collected benefits from the import taxes levied on the goods. This was not the first occasion when this had been done; there had been previous, short-lived transactions, and George Smith had managed to evade the Company's expulsion orders since 1761. But this was the first sustained and successful effort which came to plague the English Company's monopoly by real and determined opposition, while the newcomers were not burdened with the heavy overhead expenses which the Company incurred with its expensive staff living in lavish style.

The advantages accruing to Macao and its citizens were not readily evident at the time when the idea was first mooted, but in later years it was found that besides the proportions of the profits paid to the Portuguese merchants at Macao and revenues for the public exchequer, the opportunity arose for clerks and others to find employment. As the number of foreign traders increased and as the volume of trade grew so also did the number of jobs increase for clerical occupations and interpreters at Macao as well as Canton, besides the variety of jobs involved in the supervision of the unload-

⁴⁷ Used originally in a disparaging sense to identify native merchants and their ships in India, the term was employed by the English East India Company to include merchants and their ships not in the service of the Company. Yule and Burnell feel that the idiom in English may have been taken from the Portuguese 'da terra'—*of the country*, hence 'native'. See Yule and Burnell *Hobson-Jobson*: 266–67; W. C. Hunter, *The Fan-kwa at Canton*: 33; W. H. Coates, *The Old Country Trade* (London: 1911).

ing and loading and storage of goods, and as intermediaries between the foreigners and the Chinese. All this paved the way for similar occupations in Hong Kong when the British colony was established two or three generations later.⁴⁸ Several Portuguese went into business on their own, too, and some of them did very well; there were several stevedores and a couple of Portuguese shipbuilders and repairers. Two or three dockyards were set up on Lappa Island across Macao's Inner Harbour.

There were persons in Macao who opposed the entry of the foreigners; among these were some of the clerics. Several bishops in succession to each other were particularly hostile to the idea and one of them expressed the fear that the foreigners 'would corrupt the morals of the citizens'.⁴⁹

This was not the first time that there had been objections, for when, in 1732, Emperor Yung-chêng 雍正 proposed, repeating an earlier suggestion made by his father, Emperor K'ang-hsi 康熙, that China's trade with Western countries should be concentrated at and limited to Macao, 'with the object of keeping the "barbarians" out of China', the bishops of Macao, Peking and Nanking, supported by António do Amaral Meneses, Governor of Macao, had succeeded in persuading the Viceroy at Goa to veto the Macao Senate's acceptance of the idea. The Senate sent a protest to the Governor, to no purpose.⁵⁰ One of the bishops was 'filled with horror at the thought of men, worse than brutes and without fearing God's or human laws, who hired their own wives to foreigners living at Macao'.⁵¹

It should be mentioned that the newcomers who came to apply for residence at Macao were mainly Britons, Parsis and Armenians but there was a sprinkling of Dutchmen, Frenchmen and others, and a number of women did take to living as mistresses (or 'pensioners') with the foreign men, very few of whom were married, while even the Benedicks, with very few exceptions, did not bring their wives with them on the uncomfortable journeys from Europe and America to China. The English Company's rules prohibited marriage with local women in India and in the Company's establishments in the Far East, but the rules did not forbid the liaisons which became quite a

⁴⁸ J. P. Braga, *The Portuguese in Hong Kong and China* (Macao 1944). The subject of the work done by the interpreters from Macao, at Canton and Hong Kong merits study.

⁴⁹ M. Teixeira, *Macau e a sua Diocese* (Macao 1940, Vol. II: 261-2, ff).

⁵⁰ *Arquivos de Macau*, 1929, Vol. I: 253-269.

⁵¹ Subsequently when, in 1777, Dom Frey Alexandre da Silva Pedrosa Guimarães, Bishop of Macao, took office as acting governor, pending the arrival of the new Governor designate, one of his first acts was to send a recommendation to the Viceroy of Portuguese India proposing that foreigners should be forbidden the use of Macao. The Viceroy referred the matter to the Senate, and there was exchange of correspondence, from which on this occasion the Senate emerged victorious. *Arquivos de Macau*, 1929, Vol. I: 323-333. See various letters in codex *Estado da Índia, Correspondência Oficial, 1792* in the Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa. See also Casimiro Christovão de Nazareth, *Mitras Lusitanas no Oriente* (Nova Goa 1924, Vol. II: 314, 329-331 *passim*).

common practice. In fact some of the foreigners traded in the names of their local 'pensioners'.⁵²

Be that as it may, several British 'interlopers' had appeared at Canton and settled at Macao, as representatives of private traders in India, alleging often that it was their intention to try and collect debts due by the Hong merchants and other Chinese traders to them or their constituents in India. For a number of years the Chinese merchants had been experiencing difficulties and, offering high rates of interest, in contravention of the Chinese government's express instructions, had induced the 'Country merchants' in India to let them have cash loans or goods running into considerable sums of money, on extended terms. These loans were unsecured and the borrowers kept getting more and more deeply involved for, with the high interest compounding, the debts owed by Chinese 'Hong' and other merchants amounted eventually to over 4,300,000 dollars.⁵³ By 1777 only four of the Hong merchants were said to be solvent.⁵⁴

⁵² Although the majority of the foreigners living in Macao probably never gave a thought to marriage a few of them did marry their 'pensioners', generally in secret. One of the women who did marry a foreigner was Martha da Silva, who 'wedded a foreign merchant [Thomas van Mierop, of the East India Company's staff and presumably son of one of London's leading insurance men, according to information obtained by Mr Austin Coates] under romantic circumstances' (C. A. Montalto de Jesus, *Historic Macao*, Macao 1926: 134-135). She was not very well educated and seems to have experienced difficulty about the spelling of her husband's name, for when, later in life, she built a ship she called it the *Martha Merope*. Her husband had left her a considerable fortune which she employed in business and did well, and at death she bequeathed to the Santa Casa da Misericordia (the Holy House of Mercy) a large sum of money to be devoted to charitable purposes. Her portrait, with her surname misspelt 'Merop', may still be seen hanging in the committee room of this eleemosynary institution. (See the archives of the Loyal Senate and the records of the Santa Casa da Misericordia. Father Videira informs the present writer that the papers of the ecclesiastical authorities at Macao also contain several references to this subject.)

When, in later years, European concerns, especially British, set up successful businesses in the Far East they followed the old ruling, first established by the English East India Company, forbidding marriage to local women.

⁵³ The term is derived from the Dutch *daaler*, derived from *thaler*, an abbreviation of *Joachims-thaler*, first coined in 1518 in the valley (German *thal* or *dale*) of St Joachim in Bohemia. The earliest English reference to 'dollar' in the Far East seems to be in the records of the E.I. Co.'s ship *Surat* in 1664, when the ship's factors offered to deposit with the Chinese authorities '1,000 dollars, deposite for "our Ship's measure", yⁿ 1200; and after came a thousand five hundred Ryas'. Morse explains that this was the 'real-of-eight' and after 1675 also 'piece-of-eight', i.e., the *peso duro* of eight reals. 'The coin was the same as that known through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as the Spanish (or Mexican) dollar, constituting the medium of international exchange in China until 1857. It contained 416 grains of silver 900 fine, with an intrinsic value of 4s.2d. The Company invoiced it at 4s.6d. until 1619, and thereafter at 5s.' The term 'dollar' appeared for the first time in the Company's records in 1681. The 'pillar' dollars came from the mints of Spain, having the 'Pillars of Hercules' in the design, and were referred to as such in 1700, coming via Mexico and Manila. The sign '\$' for the Mexican dollar does not seem to have been used in the Company's records in China until 1828, after which it became current in the Far East (C. F. Remer, *The Foreign Trade of China*, Shanghai 1926: 23-25; E. Kann, *The Currencies of China*, Shanghai 1926: 295-298; 310-312; H. B. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. I: 47 and 96; Vol. IV: 111 and 174).

⁵⁴ In terms of modern currency the debts would amount to an enormous sum. (Michael Greenberg, *British Trade and the Opening of China, 1800-42*, Cambridge 1951: 21; H. B. Morse,

In consequence of this state of affairs the Chinese officials demanded the setting up of a fund, which was a 'voluntary' levy on the foreign trade, in the form of a 3% *ad valorem* contribution collected by the Hong merchants themselves on all imported goods, excepting woollens, calicoes and iron, and was paid into the treasury of their association. The foreigners called this the *Consoo Fund*.⁵⁵

In actual practice the tax was often increased and at times 6% of the value of the imports had to be paid into the fund, very little of which was applied, however, to the payment of debts. The Peking and Canton authorities saw to it that the money was used to defray all sorts of expenses, as the figures for 1793, given as an example, serve to show:

<i>Cong Ka</i> , ⁵⁶ a sum annually presented to the Emperor originally established instead of clocks, watches, etc., but continued although similar articles were again demanded	Tls 55,000
<i>Quan Suie</i> , ⁵⁷ a contribution to defray the expenses of the Army, demanded whenever revolt increased the expenses in this Department:	
for Fukien	50,000
for Setchuen [Szechwan]	25,000
To discharge debts of Sinqua to Europeans	42,500
Clocks, watches, and pieces of mechanism for the Emperor by order of the Hoppo	100,000
	Tls 272,500 ⁵⁸

Any excuse seems to have provided the opportunity for the mandarins to raid the Fund: floods in the north, drought, expenses of embassies, like Macartney's, and even for the personal use of the officials.

The Chinese name for the building used as the *Consoo House* was 洋行會館 *yang-hang hui-kuan*. The edifice, in its spacious grounds, was owned by the Hong merchants and was used by them as their meeting place.

It seems that among those who were creditors of the Canton merchants were London sellers of 'sing-songs' who, being anxious to do business, appear to have sold to the Canton merchants on credit. In great part the bankruptcy of the Chinese merchants was due, as has been shown, to the heavy exactions by the mandarins, and this resulted in the business in 'sing-songs' dropping off; the Canton merchants were no longer in a position to make gifts of valuable jewellery and costly mechanical toys purchased by the

Chronicles, Vol. II: 43-47; P. Auber, *China, an Outline of its Government, Laws and Policy*, London 1834: 179-80; J. B. Eames, *The English in China*, London 1909.)

⁵⁵ The name *Consoo* is derived from *Kung so* 公所, or guild, and seems to be an appellation given by the foreigners when the Fund was set up (S. Couling, *The Encyclopaedia Sinica*, Shanghai 1917: 132).

⁵⁶ 公家

⁵⁷ 關稅

⁵⁸ Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. III: 62.

mandarins at ridiculously low prices. The officials in Peking continued to demand, however, what they had come to consider theirs by right; and the Hong merchants had still to send 'sing-songs' to the mandarins at the Imperial Court regardless of the sacrifices that this represented or the hardships entailed and borne by the merchants at Canton. In hopes of an improvement in conditions the London suppliers seem to have been prepared to allow their old customers in China extended terms, but this only aggravated the situation.

Presence of 'Interlopers'

James Cox, the merchant of Shoe Lane, London, being owed a great deal of money by some of the Canton merchants, went bankrupt. The goods stocked by him were extremely valuable and he had to resort to strenuous efforts to meet his obligations. He even attempted, owing 'to the great scarcity of money in the East Indies', to sell his stock in a lottery in London, for which special permission was given by Parliament in 1774.⁵⁹ His son, John Henry Cox, then only 23 years of age, was persuaded by his father's creditors to apply to the Court of Directors of the East India Company in London for permission to proceed to China and stay there 'for a period of three years to sell his "sing-songs".'⁶⁰ and, we may presume, to try to collect money owed by the Chinese to his father's firm. Permission was granted by the Directors and John Henry Cox appeared at Canton on January 27, 1781, as an independent merchant.⁶¹

As we have seen, he was not the first such trader to enter the market, others had appeared and some of them had remained but most of these men had been summarily ousted. In his case, however, the Directors in London had taken a lenient, not to say sympathetic, attitude and it was with their authorization that he was allowed to set up in business in China. Young Cox reached Canton to learn that a Scotsman named John Reid had arrived in 1779 'with a Commission from His Imperial Austrian Majesty as Consul at Canton and Chief of the Austrian Factory'. Reid had previously seen service in the Company's marine establishment at Bengal and in that capacity had noticed the advantages of trading in China. The stratagem he had managed

⁵⁹ Needham, Wang and Price, *Heavenly Clockwork*, 1960: 152 and 207, in which reference is made to Cox's catalogues:

A Descriptive Catalogue of the Several Superb and Magnificent Pieces of Mechanism and Jewellery exhibited in Mr. Cox's Museum at Spring Gardens, Charing Cross.—Cox, London 1772.

A Descriptive Inventory of the Several Exquisite and Magnificent Pieces of Mechanism and Jewellery comprised in the Schedule annexed to an Act of Parliament made in the thirteenth year of H. M. King George III, for enabling Mr. James Cox of the City of London, Jeweller, to dispose of his Museum by way of Lottery.—Cox, London 1774.

⁶⁰ Georges Bonnant, *The Introduction of Western Horology*, quoting letter from J. H. Cox to J. H. Bradshaw in the India Office Library, Vol. 77: 95–6.

⁶¹ M. Greenberg, *British Trade*, 1951: 22.

to contrive would enable him to proceed to Canton and reside at Macao. The Company's supercargoes at Canton presented with this peculiar situation decided that they could not very well refuse his credentials and he was permitted to try his hand as a merchant, at a juncture when trade was extremely difficult.⁶²

When Cox arrived he found that most of the Chinese merchants having dealings with foreigners were insolvent and that it would be only with the greatest difficulty that he might be able to sell some of his wares. He even decided to try and exchange some of his goods for Chinese produce and in this he was successful. This enabled him to go into other business as well, and at the end of the season he turned up at Macao and applied for permission to reside there during the summer months, with Mr João de Carvalho as his sponsor.

At Macao, Cox joined Reid in business but it was not until a year later that a firm which went by the name of *Cox and Reid* evolved. The partners were joined, subsequently, by Daniel Beale, formerly a ship's purser in the English Company's service who, following the example set by Reid, obtained for himself the representation in China of the Kingdom of Prussia. Through these three merchants a number of people in India, among them several prosperous Parsi merchants and even some of the Company's officers, were able to ship Indian goods to China. This led the East India Company to think of the expedient of setting up its own House of Agency, with members of its staff as representatives at Canton, to handle the business and accounts of private merchants in India desirous of trading in China, to compete with the 'interlopers'. The E. I. Company's experiment did not prove successful, for business men and the Company's own personnel in India did not care to entrust their trade to an organization sponsored by the Company.⁶³

The business of Cox and Reid grew and before long the partners felt that they should have their own ships in which to carry their own or their clients' goods besides using the vessels of their Portuguese sponsors at Macao or their business associates at Calcutta. They bought two small Indian-built ships, the *Supply* and the *Enterprise*, which were soon engaged in carrying principally cotton piecegoods, raw cotton and opium but also a variety of Indian products from India to China.⁶⁴ From the very beginning this business

⁶² Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 85.

⁶³ Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 191, 206, 285, *passim*. Subsequently, the Company decided to make another attempt and reopened its House of Agency in 1815 but, as with the earlier attempt, little business could be obtained from private traders in India, whether Parsis or Indians, or British members of the Company's staff, who preferred to deal with the 'Country merchants' (Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 196-197, 206, 264, 285, 302, 327; Vol. III: 231 *passim*).

⁶⁴ The earliest printed quotations seem to be those which appeared from time to time in *Gazeta de Macao*, a weekly published from 1824 to 1826.

was of appreciable volume, and as numbers of the East India Company's junior employees in India were involved in it it had considerable unofficial sympathy as well as support.

Being of an enterprising turn of mind, Cox and his associates were not content merely to do business in established lines or to enter into competition with the East India Company; they began looking for other forms of activity. Among the ventures upon which they embarked with considerable enthusiasm was a new trade, that of buying furs on the Pacific coast of North America for sale at Canton and Macao.⁶⁵

Trading in Furs

The first to realize the possibilities of this trade were the officers and crew of Captain Cook's ships. In his last voyage into the Pacific, Captain James Cook, the explorer of the Pacific, had visited the west coast of Canada and there his men had acquired from the Red Indians a quantity of sea-otter and other furs, 'finer and softer than any others we know of', in exchange for things like blankets, knives, iron nails, glass beads and other trifles. Captain Cook died during the voyage but his ships, the *Resolution* and the *Discovery*, put in at Macao and Whampoa on their way home in 1779. Here the officers and men found that these skins acquired so cheaply could be sold in South China at good prices, the best for \$120 per piece, a phenomenally profitable business.⁶⁶ The Chinese were happy to get these fine furs, highly esteemed not only for coats and surcoats to be worn by men as well as women in Northern China and for caps and boots for winter wear, but for lining or trimming the state robes of the mandarins.

This is not surprising when one considers that the skins from the Canadian coast were among the 'richest, rarest and most durable known', but had not yet appeared in Canton; the Russians had, however, supplied pelts like these previously in Peking, obtained from the Bering Strait. The English sailors were not content with the prices which the Chinese merchants were prepared to pay, for they expected more and complained that the bargaining for the furs was 'unusually sharp'!⁶⁷

⁶⁵ For a study of sources: M. E. Wilbur, *The East India Company and the British Empire in the Far East* (Stanford 1945).

⁶⁶ To arrive at present-day values the Dollar should be multiplied at least twenty-five to thirty times. In other words each pelt would be worth over \$3,000 today.

⁶⁷ Capt. James Cook and Capt. James King, *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean* (London 1784, Vol. III: 419 ff). Among the members of the expedition was John Webber, draughtsman, who published in 1792, among other fine pictures, two coloured stipple engravings of places in Macao.

Captain King referred to the business:

One of our seamen sold his stock, alone, for eight hundred dollars, and a few prime skins which were clean and had been well preserved were sold for one hundred and twenty each. The whole amount of the value, in specie and goods, that was got for the furs in both ships, I am confident, did not fall far short of two thousand pounds sterling; and it was generally supposed that at least two-thirds of the quantity we had originally got from the Americans [Red Indians] were spoiled and worn out, or had been given away and otherwise disposed of, in Kamchatka. When, in addition to these facts, it is remembered that the furs were, at first, collected without our having any idea of their real value; that the greatest part had been worn by the Indians, from whom we had purchased them; that they were afterward preserved with little care, and frequently used for bed-clothes, and other purposes, during our cruise to the North; and that, probably, we had never got the full value of them in China; the advantages that might be derived from a voyage to that part of the American coast, undertaken with commercial views, appears to me of a degree of importance sufficient to call for the attention of the public.

Captain King went on to explain that the seamen were so 'possessed to return and buy another cargo of skins to make their fortunes, that it was not far short of mutiny'.

Among the other furs available, as pointed out by Capt. King, were beaver, marten, sable, ermine, fox, wolf, wolverine and bear. These furs were 'superior to those found anywhere' and the writer believed that, in the Canton market, they would fetch top prices.⁶⁸

Sensing a good thing, the firm of Cox and Reid bought a small brig of 60 tons, under the command of Captain James Hanna, and despatched the little vessel with a small cargo of woollens, blankets, iron bars, knives, nails, etc. and a supply of ornaments and baubles to the north-west coast of America, to barter with the Red Indians in Canada for furs. The area was supposed to be a preserve of the South Sea Company, of London, but this did not seem to worry Cox and his friends in the least. Five hundred and sixty sea-otter skins were obtained and landed and sold at Canton for over £5,000.⁶⁹

Other voyages followed and the ventures proving so profitable Cox and his partners felt that there was scope for a bigger capital investment. They decided to give an opportunity to some of their constituents and friends in Calcutta to join them in the business, with Cox and Reid handling the business with the Chinese, for which they would earn a commission. The Bengal Fur Society was thereupon established at Calcutta and ships were despatched, beginning in 1785, to Nootka Sound, off Vancouver Island, and other places in that region to obtain furs. The early voyages were very lucrative and the firm of 'interlopers' was able to turn over large sums of silver to the East India Company at Canton, in exchange for the Company's bills on London. Among the ships despatched were, in 1786, the *Nootka*, 200 tons (Captain

⁶⁸ Cook and King, *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean* (London 1784, Vol. III).

⁶⁹ An interesting exercise would be an attempt to work out comparative figures in terms of modern values. The total might be as much as £30,000 to £45,000.

Meares) from Calcutta and, in 1788, the *Iphigenia*, 150 tons (Captain Meares) from Macao.⁷⁰

In London, two brothers, John and Richard Cadman Etches formed, with a number of friends, the *King George's Sound Company* to promote the fur trade between the Canadian coast and South China. Their ships, the *King George* and the *Queen Charlotte*, were entrusted to the management of the East India Company at Canton. Other London merchants followed suit and the East India Company realised that they were missing a good business. We find them sending, in 1787, 'ships to the north-west coast of America', to load furs, while the Company sent shipments of furs from London.⁷¹

They were not the only ones who went after this business, for Calcutta merchants, co-operating with various Europeans, despatched vessels to the Pacific coast of Canada, while citizens of the new Republic of the United States of America also got to hear of the opportunity and vessels flying the Stars and Stripes began making their way to Nootka Sound and adjacent waters to get furs for sale in Canton. Eventually ships engaging in this trade between Canada and China were sporting a variety of standards: those of the United States, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Genoa, Tuscany, Sardinia, Naples, Denmark, Prussia and Hanover. Returning to China they did not enter the port of Macao but, after obtaining their pilots at Taipa, proceeded up the river to Whampoa. The Select Committee of the East India Company did what they could to discourage the trade but in this they were not successful.⁷² Among the Americans who did very well in this business was John Jacob Astor, whose great fortune of later years was built up from the profits first made from the sale of Canadian furs in China. By 1810 he was doing so well that he formed the American Fur Company.⁷³

The Expulsion of the 'Dadaloy'

The scramble for the use of Macao by all sorts of people was on, for the majority of those in the fur traffic were private traders who were keen on being able to co-operate with colleagues established at Macao. This led the Portuguese Crown to repeat the injunctions, reminding the authorities at

⁷⁰ J. Meares, *Voyages made in 1788 and 1789, from China to the North West Coast of America. To which are prefixed, an Introductory Narrative of a Voyage performed in 1786, from Bengal, in the Ship Nootka; and Some Account of the Trade between the North West Coast of America and China; and the Latter Country and Great Britain* (London 1790). The subject was of interest and editions appeared in French (1794), Italian and Swedish translations and again in English in 1796. See also J. W. Caughey, *History of the Pacific Coast of North America* (Los Angeles 1933: 187-194).

⁷¹ In 1793, the East India Co. bought the *Iphigenia* from Messrs. Cox and Reid at Macao for \$10,500.

⁷² H. B. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 135, 150, 173-4, 180, 185, 193, 202, *passim*.

⁷³ K. W. Porter, *John Jacob Astor Business Man* (Cambridge, Mass. 1931, Vol. I, ch. 7-9 and Vol. II, ch. 13-16); H. B. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 135.

Macao, by a Law published on May 6, 1785, that foreign ships, with the exception of Spanish vessels, were prohibited from using the port of Macao for purposes of trade. A year later a letter from the Viceroy at Goa, dated May 8, 1786, stressed the necessity of respecting the law.⁷⁴

An exception was made in the case of vessels of war. For instance, on January 3, 1787, two ships of the French navy put in at Macao, under the command of Comte de La Pérouse, Jean-François de Galàup. They were *La Boussole*, commanded by La Pérouse himself, and *L'Astrolabe*, under Captain de Langle. They were made welcome by the Portuguese authorities and permission was given for the carrying out of astronomical and other observations, in terrestrial magnetism, one of the scientific studies the French navigator was making in the course of his voyage. Among La Pérouse's other tasks was to attempt to discover the North-west Passage to the Far East, north of Canada.⁷⁵

The French officers spent several pleasant weeks at Macao, and in Camoens' Gardens they set up a small pavilion to carry out their observations. Before leaving Macao, the French took on several Portuguese sailors to replenish their crews, and the vessels sailed for the Philippines and other places, carrying out a great deal of useful exploration in the northern as well as southern parts of the Pacific. In the course of his voyage La Pérouse reached Botany Bay on January 26th, 1788. Here he buried Père Receveur, the chaplain, and a couple of his men, Portuguese sailors who had been signed on in Macao.⁷⁶ A fortnight later the French ships left Australia, after which no more was heard of them. In 1826 Capt. P. Dillon discovered what he believed to be the wreckage of *La Boussole* and *L'Astrolabe*, on a reef to the north of the New Hebrides Islands.⁷⁷

While Count La Pérouse and his expedition were at Macao, two French men-of-war, *La Resolution*, 50 guns, under Commander d'Entrecasteaux, Senior Officer of the French Naval Forces in India, and the *Subtile*, 28 guns, appeared at the Taipa anchorage on February 16 of the same year, asking for pilots to take them to the Bocca Tigris higher up the river. This seems to have given 'cause for dismay' to the Select Committee of the English East India Company at Canton, and was duly reported to the Court of Directors,

⁷⁴ Macao Senate Archives, *Register No. 71*, ff. 256-262.

⁷⁵ M. L. A. Milet-Mureau, *Voyage de La Pérouse autour du Monde pendant les années 1785-1788* (Paris 1797); J-J de La Billardière, *Relation du voyage à la recherche de La Pérouse* (Paris 1797); Laharpe, *Relation abrégée du voyage de La Pérouse, pendant années 1785, 1786, 1787 et 1788* (Leipsick 1799).

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⁷⁷ See La Billardière, *op. cit.*, in Note 75; P. Dillon, *Narrative of a Voyage in the South Seas for the Discovery of the fate of La Pérouse* (London 1829); Dumont d'Urville, *Voyage de la corvette 'L'Astrolabe'* (Paris 1833).

for it was inconceivable to the Committee that vessels of war should want to visit Whampoa which was essentially a harbour for merchant craft. The French had no intention, however, of engaging in trade and after ships' supplies had been taken on board and without loading any Chinese cargo they left these waters. The Committee heaved a sigh of relief and reported accordingly to the Court of Directors at London, so jealous were they of anything that savoured of competition to their trade at Canton.⁷⁸

For merchant vessels the Portuguese laws were explicit and the first ship to fall under the expulsion orders, in 1787, was the *Calhariz*, better known by its earlier name, *Dadaloy*, which had been known, for a couple of years, as the *Hamot*. She was now under the command of a Portuguese skipper, Ricardo José Bello. This vessel, as the *Dadaloy*, had been involved, not long before, in a succession of disagreeable incidents, at Macao, Whampoa and off the South China coast.⁷⁹ In 1780 she was commanded by Capt. John McClary and visited the Taipa anchorage, where a Spanish sloop among other vessels was also anchored. On May 20, 1781 when the Spanish vessel set sail for Manila, Capt. McClary went off in pursuit. Soon afterwards he returned to Macao with the Spanish ship and declared that he had captured the vessel as his prize, claiming that he had a commission in the form of 'letters of marque and reprisal'.

The Portuguese authorities ordered the immediate release of the Spanish sloop but this order McClary refused to obey. Then a storm arose and the Spanish vessel was wrecked, upon which McClary was detained and ordered to pay compensation to the extent of 70,000 Spanish dollars. He was only released, two months later, when he paid this money, not until he had been threatened with delivery to the Chinese for trial as a pirate.⁸⁰

McClary then left in the *Dadaloy* for Whampoa where, three months later, in August 1781, he was involved in another incident, for he seized a Country ship from Surat, the *Felix*, which was under Dutch colours. Claiming that a state of war existed between England and Holland, and, in complete disregard of the general understanding that the neutrality of the ports of China should be respected by every nation, he took the *Felix* as his prize. He made preparations to leave Whampoa and to take the *Felix* with him, to which the mandarins objected, threatening reprisals, and they despatched reinforcements to the Chinese forts. Eventually a compromise was reached between the mandarins

⁷⁸ Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 134.

⁷⁹ In Portuguese and English documents the spelling used for this ship's name was very capricious and it appears as *Dadaloy*, *Dodaloy*, *Dadoloy*, *Dadeloy*, *Dadelay*, *Dedelay* and other variants.

⁸⁰ C. A. Montalto de Jesus, *Historic Macao* (1926: 193). See *Register of Proceedings of the General Councils of the Macao Senate*, 6 Sept. 1752 to 27 October, 1786, ff. 107-108v.; 108v.-109; 109-109v.; 109v.-110v.

and McClary, the latter being 'permitted to withhold an iron chest containing pearls and gold freighted by Armenians'. The contents of the chest were stated to be invoiced at 89,128 rupees (over £30,000).⁸¹

The Governor of Kwangtung wrote ordering the English East India Company to make restitution, compel McClary to pay compensation and to keep the peace for the future. In the course of a rather bitter admonition the Chinese Governor pointed out:

You English are a lying and troublesome people, for other Nations that come to Canton are peaceful and do not hurt any one, but you English are always in trouble, . . . Your Chief and Second Supra Cargoes⁸² are sent here by your King to superintend the Business of the Company—and private Persons are permitted to trade here by the same Power—why did you therefore say that you had not the Power to prevent the Misdeeds of these People, and refused to obey when I ordered to come to the Boca Tigris⁸³ to oblige this McClary to restore what he had taken?⁸⁴

The Select Committee reported the matter to the Court of Directors in London and informed them that 'McClary had made a compromise with the Chinese Mandareens, who were very apprehensive of being disgraced in their Contest with him, which we think was dishonourable to both parties & of a pernicious tendency to our Affairs'.⁸⁵

On the one hand the 'Country merchants' demanded the right to trade freely in China and, on the other, the Select Committee were anxious to retain their monopoly, but, posing as consular representatives of various European states, these independent merchants 'every day commit some irregularity . . . for which the Company are held responsible, for the Mandarins will not allow themselves to believe, that every Englishman, who comes here, is not under the Controul of the Chief [Superintendent]'.

⁸¹ Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 79. The equivalent of this sum in modern times might amount to a quarter of a million pounds sterling.

⁸² This was the form in which the term *Supercargo* was often written in the 18th century (See Note 11 *supra*).

⁸³ *Boca de Tigre*, the name given by the Portuguese, based on the Chinese original *Hu-mén* 虎門, which the British rendered as *Boca Tigris* and was adopted subsequently by other nations, in the Pearl River estuary.

⁸⁴ Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 65.

⁸⁵ Some years later, in 1831, summarizing the views of the Select Committee at Canton, on the conduct of the mandarins, a despatch was sent to the Governor-General of India, in the course of which the McClary incident was mentioned. An extract of the relevant portion of this document reads:

In the year 1781, a Captain MacLary commander of the Country ship 'Dodalo' from Bengal, took violent possession of a Dutch ship with much valuable property, at anchor, in the Port of Whampoa, defied the Chinese Government and was proceeding to Sea with his prize—When threats towards him were found unavailing the following ingenious arrangement took place through the mediation of the Hong Merchants. The Dutch Prize being near the Bogue Fort (*Bocca Tigris Fort*), Captain MacLary ordered his people out of her, when she was boarded by a Chinese Mandarin, and Soldiers, in a shouting triumphant manner, as if recaptured by force. In reward of his condescension Captain MacLary was secretly permitted to retain an iron chest, containing pearls and gold to a large value. . . (Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. IV: 315).

McClary was neither a Company employee nor a representative of a European state; even by the standards of his days he was nothing but a pirate.⁸⁶

A few weeks later the Select Committee had to report that Capt. McClary, in the *Dadaloy*, with another ship, the *Death and Glory*, which also claimed to be a privateer, 'had captured two ships from Macao . . . to reimburse the loss sustained by him last year'. They also

likewise beg leave to prefer another complaint against this Gentleman for going forcibly on board a Chinese Junk near Banca belonging to a principal Merchant [Chowqua], a Hong merchant of this place [Canton] which he plundered for 4 days & took out goods to a very considerable amount on pretence of their being Dutch.⁸⁷

These piracies led to complaints being lodged, by the Governor of Macao and the Netherlands' Superior Council at Batavia with the Governor-General of India, Mr Warren Hastings. To them Mr Hastings replied stating that the Council in India had caused McClary to be apprehended, and charged at Fort William, only to release him 'because there were no proofs, or valid grounds for a criminal indictment', adding that 'if some person would come forward to prosecute and produce evidence to support the charges' for prosecution at Fort St George, 'where Competent Admiralty Jurisdiction exists by the Old Charter', the Council 'would grant him all the Assistance and Support in our power to obtain a legal decision'.⁸⁸

With such unsavoury antecedents it is not surprising that the Leal Senado should have considered the vessel suspect. The Aldermen decided that the ship still belonged to its English owners in Bombay and that it 'had been surreptitiously renamed the *Calhariz*'. As for the document of its purported sale to a Portuguese from Calcutta living at Macao, João de Carvalho, the Macao Senate declared that this was probably 'irregular and false and therefore null and void'.⁸⁹

The mandarins at Canton had also had enough of this vessel. She had arrived, furthermore, at a most inopportune time for the Portuguese because

⁸⁶ Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 64-65; J. F. Davis, *China: A General Description of that Empire and its Inhabitants* (London 1857, Vol. I: 50-51, 54-56); C. A. Montalto de Jesus, *Historic Macao*: 193-4; Charles Gutzlaff, *A Sketch of Chinese History* (London 1834, Vol. II: 335).

⁸⁷ Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 79-80. The Macao archives contain references to the second incident involving this ship. See *Register of Various Orders and Letters, 17 April 1783 to 21 May 1816*, ff. 5v.; *Register of Instructions from the Government of Goa, 6 April 1783 to 8 May 1786*, ff. 18-19, 24-25.

⁸⁸ Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 86-87. These niceties about legal technicalities, that McClary should have been charged at Fort St George and not Fort William, could not have been very satisfactory to the Portuguese, as the Complaints were lodged with the English Governor-General, and the question of jurisdiction should have been worked out by the British authorities themselves.

⁸⁹ In the Macao Archives may be seen no less than seven documents dealing with this strange case: *Register No. 71*, ff. 256-257; ff. 257; ff. 257v.-258; ff. 258v.; ff. 259v.-260; ff. 260v.-261; ff. 261v.-262. Transcripts of these documents were very kindly made available to the present writer by Father Videira Pires, S.J.

the Chinese officials had concocted a new ruse for making money by threatening to establish a Co-Hong to control Macao's trade. It seems that the Chinese officials had accused the Portuguese of allowing Dutch consignees to make use of Portuguese ships to carry Dutch goods to Macao, to get the benefit of more advantageous taxation than if these articles of merchandise had been landed at Whampoa.⁹⁰ The Chinese merchants at Macao were now negotiating, by offering a big bribe, to persuade the Canton officials to give up the idea. One of the conditions seems to have been that the Macao trade would be limited to Portuguese and Manila ships, leaving the far richer trade of the English and other Western countries to be concentrated at Whampoa, under the direct surveillance of the mandarins. The appearance of a foreign ship believed to be masquerading as Portuguese, and one, furthermore, which had already given a great deal of trouble, might upset the delicate negotiations.

The Senate seems to have been greatly concerned about the feelings of the mandarins with regard to the new Co-Hong and the control of Macao trade from Canton.⁹¹ They deliberated on the matter and sent a letter to the Juiz de Alfandega (Controller of the Customs Office), António José da Costa, instructing him 'not to agree to the admission of merchandise in the Customs Office from a Ship which was believed to be English'. The document transcribes a Senatorial Resolution of June 15, 1787 and goes on to state:

This Senate has been informed that a Foreign Ship, allegedly Portuguese, expects to enter the port of Macao and unload its merchandise into the Macao Customs. To justify the use of the [Portuguese] flag there is a Portuguese individual, but all the rest of the crew are Indians and Britons. This is a serious matter, for this port has always been forbidden to Foreign Vessels, as has been repeatedly pointed out in Royal Laws, Orders, and Instructions, for the preservation of this Place, and to foster friendly relations with the Chinese.⁹²

The letter went on to remind the Juiz de Alfandega that the Chinese had lately made arrangements to set up a *Cohão* (Co-Hong) for goods at Macao and if the Portuguese started to allow foreign ships to unload at Macao the Chinese would resent it and surely create difficulties for Macao. The letter concluded by drawing the attention of the Customs' officials to the *Ordens Regias* (Royal Orders) from Lisbon.⁹³

⁹⁰ The Chinese documents referred to cannot be found in the Macao Archives, but may possibly be included among some four hundred original documents in the Portuguese National Archives seen by the present writer in Lisbon.

⁹¹ See Note 14 *supra*.

⁹² Archives of the Macao Senate, *Register No. 71*, ff. 256-256v. Translated from the Portuguese.

⁹³ The Senatorial Resolution was signed by the aldermen: Raimundo Nicolao Vieira, José de Miranda e Souza, José Joaquim Barros, Simão de Araujo Rosa and Felipe Lourenço de Mattos, and endorsed by the Secretary and other officials. This reference to the proposed attempt to set up a Co-Hong to control the trade of the Portuguese port does not seem to have been mentioned elsewhere.

Four days later a meeting of the Senate was convened to receive a report that the ship had been permitted by the Macao Customs to enter the port. This led to another Resolution being passed and addressed to the Juiz da Alfandega, 'Protesting against Your Honour's acts and holding you responsible for losses of this Senate's privileges by your disregard of the instructions not to admit Foreign Ships in this Port. And if from this cause the Co-Hong established at Canton should exercise its powers in Macao as well as other harmful consequences that may result in the future, you shall bear the responsibility thereof'.⁹⁴

The Senate also sent a letter on June 19th to Senhor Bernardo Aleixo de Lemos Faria, the Governor of Macao, setting forth the Senate's point of view:

Your Excellency has inopportunately consented to the ship *Dadelay* passing the Fortress of Barra and anchoring in the port of this City without first obtaining the approval of this Senate in the usual manner. Your Excellency does not ignore the fact that a Co-Hong has been ordered to be set up in the City of Canton for merchandise from the Ships of this City, delivered to a monopoly of the Chinese Officials, on which heavy taxes would certainly have to be paid. Your Excellency took cognizance of the despatch of a petition sent by the Chinese merchants of this City [Senate of Macao], in which they asked for a loan of four thousand patacas,⁹⁵ added to the sum of ten thousand they had already borrowed, which they had spent with the object of bringing about the reversal of the arrangements for the setting up of the Co-Hong. This money was lent for the aforesaid purpose with Your Excellency's approval, by your despatch. The intempestive admittance of the said Ship will not serve surely but to delay and make more difficult the reversal of the order for the setting up of the Co-Hong, and completely prejudice the citizens of Macao, with the loss of this City's privileges. We send you a copy of information forwarded to us by the Judge of this Court, from which you will observe that the ship *Dadelay* belongs, without any doubt, to the English of Bombay and that the passport carried by the ship bears all the signs of being false, because it is incredible that this Vessel, two monsoons out of Bombay should have a [Portuguese] Captain and the [Portuguese] flag this same year in this City. The said Passport cannot be genuine.

We also send you an Order we have received from the Governor-General of India, from which Your Excellency will observe how insistently he recommends this Senate to endeavour to use influence to bring about the closure of the proposed *Co-Hong*.

By reason of which this Senate craves that Your Excellency will give due consideration to what we allege, in the service of His Majesty and for the welfare of the City, and will

⁹⁴ *Register No. 71. ff. 256-257.* Like the other documents in the archives of the Macao Senate quoted in this article, unpublished so far, this has been translated here from the Portuguese.

⁹⁵ *Pataca*, the unit of currency at Macao. Circulating originally in India the equivalent in the 16th century of the *cruzado*, or the ducat, it came into use in Macao only in the 18th century. It had already decreased greatly in value and was then equal to the Mexican silver peso, which contained approximately one oz. of silver. This remained the value until 1938, when the Hong Kong dollar was divorced from silver and linked with sterling at 1/3d. Since then the pataca has been established as the equivalent of the Hong Kong dollar. (This subject has yet to receive the attention of historians of Far Eastern currency. See Note 53.)

It is not recorded what the sum eventually paid by the Chinese Macao merchants to the mandarins might have been. Whatever it was, the sum must have been a big one and to arrive at the equivalent present-day value it would be necessary to multiply it some twenty to thirty times. Thus the \$14,000 alone borrowed from the Senate would be equal to \$300,000 to \$400,000, and probably very much more today.

cause the departure of the said Ship from this Port, for this is the only way in which we can give satisfaction to the Chinese Government and preserve this City's privileges.⁹⁶

The Governor of Macao did not delay a reply, for he wrote on the same day to point out that he had been informed that

the ship *Calhariz* has been bought by João Carvalho, a Portuguese merchant, proof of which has been given to me in a Letter received from the said merchant and the Indenture which he has shown me regarding the purchase mentioned. Because of this and in the face of the Passport which the said ship carries, issued by the Illustrious and Excellent Governor and Captain-General of India, I have granted Permission for the said ship to enter this port, in accordance with the usual practice observed during all the four years I have governed this City, regardless of any of Your Honours' resolutions and independently of any Despatch of the Senate, principally since the monsoon of 1784, when steps were taken to put into execution and establish the Customs Service here, by Order of Her Majesty.

He went on to observe that the Senate seemed to believe that this matter concerned the Chinese, whereas 'the inspection of ships was the ordinary duty of Macao's Procurator'. The Governor added:

I cannot understand the omissions, delays and doubts which usually trouble Your Honours on a number of similar occasions as being the possible case for conflict with the Chinese.

The Chinese may establish in their Port of Canton as many Co-Hongs as they please; but under no circumstances in this possession, which we are happy to hold as a domain of our most August Sovereign, and where, in consequence whereof, instructions have been given to adopt the necessary steps to avoid, once and for all, the indecorous and humiliating satisfactions so frequently given to the Chinese Government. By reason whereof I am greatly surprised that Your Honours even think of referring to the said Ship *Calhariz*, which only yesterday entered the anchorage of this City, and which has been done with the object of preserving the ancient privileges, the greatest and the principal of the said privileges having been, unfortunately, lost an infinite number of years ago, by reason of the same doubts and the same humiliations to which submission has been given in the past.

The Governor concluded by

Finally assuring Your Honours of the impossibility to give heed to your request made for the departure of the Ship abovementioned, as it is neither just nor dignified in my position to fail to sustain the validity of a passport issued by the Supreme Government of India, of which I and Your Honours are subjects, and very much more so after I have verified it to be genuine, in spite of the appearance of falsity which Your Honours seem to have found.

Therefore, and for all that this represents and may come, Your Honours are to be held responsible to his said Excellency, the Captain-General of India.⁹⁷

The Senate followed this up by taking the matter to Court and the Juiz Ordinario [Magistrate], Simão de Araujo Rosa, 'based on the proofs laid before the Court', decided against the Governor's ruling, and held that the ship and its cargo were in reality English. He denied to the ship the right to be registered at Macao and ordered its expulsion from Portuguese waters. Certified copies were thereupon sent to the Customs Office ordering the Court's decision to be carried out. The Portuguese decided, however, not to

⁹⁶ Macao Senate Register No. 71, ff. 257v.-258.

⁹⁷ Register No. 71 of the Macao Senate archives, ff. 259v.-260v.

order the sequestration of the *Dadaloy* and its cargo. The vessel had to leave the port of Macao.⁹⁸

No difficulties with the Chinese arose and the negotiations at Canton were successfully concluded, for the suggested Co-Hong at Macao did not materialize, as the result of the efforts made in Canton by the Chinese merchants of Macao. The mandarins continued to tax, however, all goods destined for transshipment to China, at the Chinese Customs Station which had been flourishing at Macao for many years.

For the Macao Senate there was a surprise in store when, a year later, a letter of censure arrived from the Viceroy at Goa. He wrote informing the Portuguese authorities at Macao that the registration of the *Calhariz*, ex-*Hamot*, ex-*Dadaloy*, had in fact been properly carried out at Goa and that the ship had actually been given Portuguese status.

In his rebuke the Viceroy pointed out that the Senate had shown very clearly 'the very spirit of partiality, lack of harmony and even poor patriotism which dominates a great part of the inhabitants of Macao', for the Senate has set up obvious discrimination in its treatment of Portuguese merchants established in the city, and had gone so far as 'to deny, unjustly, the right to passports applied for by João de Carvalho, who wished to "manage" the money of some Englishmen'. This being so 'it is something which is contrary to the Law, for it is clear that the Law permits any citizen of Macao to utilize the money of foreigners to add to the volume of his business, which will result in greater income for the Customs, the product of which will revert to the Royal Exchequer'. Such being the case, the funds could be applied to useful purposes with 'a number of conveniences and advantages' to Macao.

The letter went on to emphasize that 'it is very well known that much of the unrest in Macao has been caused and incited by some of the citizens of Macao, who have been filled with envy at the prosperity of others'. The Viceroy added that the merchants of Macao instead of being involved in affairs in which the authorities could not help them should think more of the commonweal, while 'abstaining from living in excessive luxury' and also by 'avoiding domestic dissensions' thereby to acquire the good reputation enjoyed by responsible businessmen, which would lead to foreigners being prepared to entrust them with their 'funds and goods', for had not several merchants done well 'during the recent War, with money associated with the interests of foreign individuals?'⁹⁹

⁹⁸ There seems to be nothing in the Macao archives to indicate who was found to be the real owner of the *Calhariz*, late *Dadaloy*. João de Carvalho who was shown as the registered owner of the ship happened to be also the sponsor in Macao of John Henry Cox as well as other 'Country' merchants, but nothing shows if there was any connection between the two persons in the case of this vessel.

⁹⁹ The War of American Independence (1775-1783), when France and Spain joined (1779) on the side of the American colonists. To protect their goods against seizure by French warships,

The Viceroy ended by 'ordering the Senate not to impede the entry and unloading of the ships registered in the name of the said João Carvalho, nor to refuse any more the issuance of passports, nor make the "reprehensible differences" above referred to'.¹⁰⁰

To this admonition the Senate does not seem to have replied. At least, the surviving records at Macao do not appear to show that any letter was sent to the Governor-General at Goa.

The port of Macao was closed to foreign ships that sought to engage in trade for a few more years, but times were changing and eventually these restrictions were not always strictly enforced. Spanish ships from Manila were free, however, to use the port of Macao. But foreigners desiring to reside at Macao had to obtain a Portuguese sponsor and permission from the authorities before being allowed to set up domicile. Early in the 19th century, in the last ten to twenty years or so before Hong Kong was established even this regulation was not very stringently put into effect.

Private Merchants Strongly Entrenched

The *tempo* of the China trade intensified, and Lord Cornwallis, Mr Warren Hastings' successor as Governor-General at Fort William, Bengal, wrote to the Company's Select Committee at Canton stating that 'leading private merchants in India had complained of the obstructions that they have met with in their mercantile adventures at Canton . . . they have ventured to assert that some of the Supercargoes have engaged in private trade, which they partly carry on under the name of Mr Cox, a free merchant, and in many instances make use of their influence to force private traders to buy and sell their opium and other commodities upon disadvantageous terms'.¹⁰¹

Strict orders were thereupon issued to the Company's Select Committee at Canton to exercise their powers of expulsion. In consequence of this a public inquiry was held and Mr Daniel Beale was taxed with being an unlicensed British subject and was ordered to leave China, upon which, with a great show of ceremony, he produced an official document from 'Count Lusi, *Envoyé Extraordinaire de sa Majesté le Roi de Prusse auprès du Roi de la Grande Bretagne*' appointing Mr Daniel Beale, Consul for Prussia at Canton and

several British merchants registered these in the name of Portuguese sponsors at Macao or Calcutta, which led, as has been shown, to these foreigners being permitted to reside at Macao.

¹⁰⁰ Macao Senate Register No. 59—'Ordens de Goa desde 11-4-1787 ate 16-5-1793', ff. 1-2, the Viceroy's letter being dated at Goa, April 28, 1788. The text in Portuguese has been published in *Religião e Patria* (Macau 1962: 506-509).

¹⁰¹ *East India Co. Factory Records: China* (82), quoted by M. Greenberg, *British Trade and the Opening of China, 1800-42*, 1951: 24.

Macao. The Company's Committee in China must have been chagrined at this rebuff.¹⁰²

The 'interlopers', in their turn, received a rude shock when they learned that John Reid had gone bankrupt. Not content with the truly splendid profits made by the firm of which he was a partner, he had been engaging in some speculations on his own account in Canton, probably selling on extended terms to Chinese merchants goods obtained on credit from his constituents in India or lending money borrowed in India to Chinese merchants in Canton for the sake of the higher rate of interest promised by the Chinese. He overestimated the probity of his Chinese clients and when these debtors absconded he sustained such heavy losses that he had to declare himself insolvent. The Imperial Austrian Company closed its doors and John Reid left China, a victim of his own gullibility and covetousness.¹⁰³

The East India Company now brought pressure to bear on Mr Cox, and he was required to leave China 'by one of the ships of the current season'. The young man had no alternative but to bow before the authority of the Company and he left early in 1788.¹⁰⁴ Not so the firm of Cox and Beale which was founded to take over the business of Cox and Reid. It was a flourishing concern at Macao, and Cox was well off, for the young man who had gone out to China in 1781 merely to dispose of 'an assortment of sing-songs' had been able within seven years, by a series of lucky operations, to amass a considerable fortune.

John Henry Cox returned to Europe with the self-confidence born of the success which had attended his efforts in China. One of his first steps was to obtain a commission in the Swedish navy, and he also secured an appointment as a member of the Prussian Consular Representation in China. He bought a brig and in it he sailed to Nootka Sound to buy seal-skins.

Under the management of Daniel Beale the firm carried on business very successfully at Macao and Canton, with his younger brother Thomas, who arrived in 1796, as 'Secretary to the Prussian Consulate'.¹⁰⁵ The ships of Cox and Beale and their associated Bengal Fur Society continued to acquire furs on the Canadian coast but the prices paid in China were no longer as high as in early days; nevertheless the demand for skins was maintained for a number of years, with handsome profits for those dealing in them.

¹⁰² Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II, p. 150.

¹⁰³ Greenberg, *British Trade and the Opening of China*, 1951: 25.

¹⁰⁴ Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 142.

¹⁰⁵ Thomas Beale was only seventeen years old when he arrived. He had a checkered career at Macao and died there in 1841 (*Chinese Repository*, 11: 59; Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 285).

Unsuccessful Spanish Interference

A temporary set-back took place in 1791 when the Chinese authorities, believing the sea-otter skins to be of Russian origin, prohibited their importation as the 'Emperor of China has been at variance with that Nation for some years past'. This restriction was removed in the following year, when the Chinese authorities had been satisfied as to the place of origin not being Russian.¹⁰⁶

Spanish officers, 'in the *Princeza* (Captain Don Estevan Martinez) and the *San Carlos*', also entered the scene. Claiming that their sovereign owned the entire coast of North America as far as the Bering Sea, they had seized, in 1789, five ships, two of them Portuguese (the *Princesa Real* and the *Argonaut*) both managed by Cox and Beale. The vessels were taken to San Blas, Mexico, but the owners, through the Portuguese Government, entered protests to Spain and the ships were ordered to be returned with some compensation.¹⁰⁷

In the records of the East India Company may be seen several references to the ships from Macao which had been seized by the officious Spaniards:

May, 30 [1791]. The *Argonaut* brig, Captain James Colnett, arrived [at Macao] from St. Blas and the North West Coast of America, this Vessel was fitted out from Macao the 25th April 1789 for the North West Coast of America and was one of those which were captured by the Spaniards in Nootka Sound, and was restored the 4th of June 1790. We are informed they have received the sum of Forty Thousand Dollars from the Vice Roy of Mexico as a full compensation for the losses they may have sustained. There are on board many Sea Otter Skins, but in consequence of the late prohibition they cannot be disposed of, they have received the [Portuguese] Governor's permission to lay in the Typa to refit.¹⁰⁸

As the prohibition against the sale of those furs in China was then in force, and being unable to sell at Canton, Cox and Beale thought of sending their ship to Korea or even Japan, if the latter could be persuaded to lift the centuries-old ban against Western ships and traders, and if markets could be found there. The weather happened to be bad and the *Argonaut* returned to Macao. Eventually the skins were shipped to Europe on board the Hon. E. I. Company's *Governor Coote*, for disposal there.

The Spanish government having ordered that the *Princesa Real* and the *Argonaut* be returned to their rightful owners, the latter ship, as we have

¹⁰⁶ Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 183.

¹⁰⁷ Registered and fitted out at Macao, the firm's vessels sailed under the Portuguese flag. This was not only because Cox found it necessary to comply with the Portuguese laws; but he found that by doing so he could save \$2,000 per ship on each occasion that the vessel made port at Macao—one of the several advantages which foreign merchants trading at Macao could enjoy.

¹⁰⁸ Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 185–186. Capt. Colnett had been an officer in Capt. Cook's expedition of 1776–1779.

seen, was duly sent back to Macao while the *Princesa Real*, under the Spanish flag, actually arrived but had the misfortune to be wrecked at Taipa during a typhoon, before the Spanish were able to turn her over to the owners.

The records of the East India Company contain references to the incident:

Aug. 11. Arrived at this Port [Macao] a Sloop under Spanish Colors from Manilla, this Vessel was formerly the *Princess Royal* fitted out from England in 1787 & after her return from China to the North West Coast of America in 1789 was captured by the Spaniards at Nootka Sound.

Aug. 18. This day we experienced a very severe Gale of Wind. . . . The Spanish Sloop lost her mast and anchors and was driven on shore in the Typa.

Aug. 27. Received a letter from the Spanish Council of Supra Cargoes. Gentlemen—We have an Order from His Excellency the Governor & Captain-General of the Philippines to deliver here to Messrs. James Colnet & Thomas Hudson [the skipper of the *Princess Royal*] the Vessel *Princess Royal* in the same state as she was when she was detained by an officer of our Royal Navy in the Port of St. Laurence in Nootka situated in the Septentrional Coast of California.¹⁰⁹

The Spaniards were obviously trying to palm off the wrecked ship hoping that the Select Committee of the East India Company would be naïve enough to accept delivery of the vessel. But the Company's officials declined to be inveigled into such a compromising position. Not only was the ship a wreck on shore but the Chinese officials would not permit the furs to be sold at Canton and, in their reply to the Spanish proffer, the Company's Select Committee stated that 'as the above mentioned Vessel is not the property of the English East India Company, and the owners having as we understand submitted an account of the Losses they had sustained to be adjusted in Europe, we must thereupon decline acceding to your proposal'.¹¹⁰ Eventually the British Government brought pressure to bear upon the Spanish Government and an agreement was signed at London, in 1793, when Spain agreed to pay a compensation of \$210,000, which must have resulted in a very satisfactory showing in Cox and Beale's books.¹¹¹

Prosperity of Cox and Beale

Meanwhile another ship belonging to *Cox and Beale* reached Macao, direct from the Pacific coast of Canada. She was the *Nootka*, and the English East India Company's Select Committee in South China, then in Macao, recorded the vessel's arrival at the Portuguese port in 1791:

July 19. Anchored in the Typa a brig belonging to Mr. John Henry Cox with about Eight thousand Seal Skins procured at the Islands of St. Paul or Amsterdam. This vessel was

¹⁰⁹ Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 186.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. II: 186-7.

¹¹¹ Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 186-7; M. E. Wilbur, *The E.I. Company and the British Empire*, 1945: 345.

formerly the *Nootka* fitted out from Bengal for the North West Coast of America, afterwards disposed of at Macao to a naturalized Portuguese Merchant residing there, from whom she was purchased last year by Mr. Cox and recalled the *Nootka*.

July 22. The *Nootka* anchored in the Macao Roads under English Colors intending to proceed to Whampoa; having reason to suppose she had not a proper pass, or permission to navigate under English Colors, we sent a Chop¹¹² to the Merchants [the Chinese Hong Merchants], requesting they would acquaint the Hoppo¹¹³ with the Circumstances, that in case they committed any irregularities or transgressed against the rules of the Port we might not be considered as accountable.¹¹⁴

Although the Company's Select Committee did not view the arrival of the vessel with very good grace they could not do more than show displeasure by writing as they did. The owners decided to transfer the vessel to the Prussian flag, and in this status the ship put into South China waters on at least two other occasions in subsequent years.

In spite of the competition from these independent merchants the E. I. Company benefited to a considerable extent by their business in China. For instance, after disposing of their furs and other goods Cox and Beale delivered to the East India Company large sums in silver bullion and sycee¹¹⁵ received from the Chinese buyers and obtained the Company's bills on London in sterling for payment to this concern in England. The silver thus received at Canton was utilized by the E. I. Company, in its turn, to pay for the tea shipped to London. This was acceptable to the Company for the problem of finding sufficient silver to take to China in order that their purchases of tea might be paid for in cash had been giving the Company a great deal to worry about, and the 'Country' trade thus proved to be very convenient, although the Company was so much against the presence of the 'interlopers'.

¹¹² *Chop*, from the Portuguese word *chapa*, meaning official document with a sealed impression, with the specific sense of passport or licence, but also for communications of an official character on which had been made the impression of a seal of office (S. B. Dalgado, *Glossario Luso-Asiatico*, Coimbra 1919, Vol. I: 259-60; H. Yule and A. C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, London 1903: 207-9).

¹¹³ The Superintendent of Customs at Canton, who was the representative of the *Hu-pu* (戶部, the Board of Revenue at the capital). The term *Hoppo* used by the foreigners was confined to Canton. S. Wells Williams believed that 'the term is a corruption of *hoi-po-sho*' (*Chinese Commercial Guide*, p. 221). It was first used by the Portuguese in the 16th century at a time when this officer held the post of Chief Treasurer of Canton. By the 18th century the rapacity of the *Hoppo* and his staff knew few bounds (Dalgado, *Glossario*, pp. 458-9; Yule & Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, p. 426).

¹¹⁴ Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 187.

¹¹⁵ *Sycee*, ingots of pure silver in the commercialese among the merchants at Canton, derived from the Cantonese pronunciation of *hsi ssü* 細絲 (literally small or fine silk), because when the silver was melted down markings like fine threads appeared on the surface of the metal, and also the silver could be drawn out into silk-like threads. The purer the silver the finer the filaments of metal. The correct term was *yüan pao* 元寶, usually fifty taels in weight, although smaller sizes were also made, stamped with the seal of the smelter. Silver in small ingots (called *shoes*, corrupted from the Dutch *schuyt* [*goldschuyt*, 'boat of gold'] in China) and particles of silver. In trade this silver was weighed, not counted as coins (Yule & Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*: 886; S. Couling, *The Encyclopaedia Sinica*, 1917: 512 and 537; E. Kann, *The Currencies of China*, 1926: 178-9; H. A. Giles, *Glossary of Reference*, Shanghai 1900: 159).

In fact the trade by the private merchants in India with China can be said to have become complementary to that of the E. I. Company, especially when the Company decided not to use its ships to transport opium to China. In 1787, as a case in point, 53% of the silver needed for the Company's investment at Canton, for teas, silk, etc., came from silver turned into the Company's treasury from the 'Country' trade. In a confidential report to the Court of Directors in London, the Select Committee at Canton even reported on John Henry Cox that he

had always conducted himself with great propriety, and becoming respect and deference to the Hon'ble Company's authority; more especially as he has been of signal utility to us upon several occasions which our absence from Canton would have otherwise rendered very embarrassing.¹¹⁶

Nevertheless, when late in September, 1791, John Henry Cox turned up at Whampoa in the *Mercury*, the Company's Select Committee stormed and threatened, refusing to give him, as a subject of the British sovereign, permission to land at Canton. They contended that he was infringing their monopoly. But Cox proceeded to hoist Prussian colours and nonchalantly stepped ashore.¹¹⁷

It is interesting to note that in the same year the *Nootka* brought 9,619 seal skins from Western Canada, while the Company's ships brought from England, presumably from Eastern Canada and the Hudson Bay areas, *via* London, 8,608 otter skins, 36,983 beaver, 7,537 martin, 1,350 fox and 115,510 rabbit skins. In the next year a single ship flying the Genoese flag imported 8,420 fine furs and 164,620 rabbit skins. Two years later American ships brought 43,770 fine furs while English ships carried 62,790 with 262,095 rabbit skins.¹¹⁸ With imports on this scale profits from the sale of skins and furs dropped gradually, but it took some years before profits disappeared altogether. The Chinese demand seemed to be almost insatiable.

The ships belonging to John Henry Cox and his associates gave up the fur trade before long and concentrated on the carrying of goods, mainly opium and cotton in increasing quantities, between India and China. Their shipments made heavy inroads even upon the Company's business in raw cotton and yarn and cotton goods, for they loaded 149,430 piculs of these

¹¹⁶ Morse, *Chronicles*, II: 85.

¹¹⁷ G. Mortimer, *Observations and remarks made during a voyage to the Islands of Teneriffe, Amsterdam, Maria's Islands near Van Diemen's Land; Otaheite, Sandwich Islands; Orwhyhee, the Fox Islands on the North West Coast of America, Tinian, and from thence to Canton. In the brig Mercury commanded by John Henry Cox* (London 1790); H. H. Bancroft, *History of the Northwest Coast* (San Francisco, 2 vols., 1884); Greenberg, *British Trade*, 1951: 25. The *Mercury* continued to ply in and out of the Canton River for several years.

¹¹⁸ Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 185, 193, 256 *passim*.

commodities in 1793 to the Company's 30,780 piculs.¹¹⁹ To a great extent they acted on behalf of principals in India, little of their own capital being tied up. We may presume that they also imported small quantities of pepper and other spices, sandalwood, ivory, metals such as copper, lead and steel, and other goods like rice, beans, nuts, ebony wood and saltpetre.¹²⁰

The one-time seller of 'sing-songs' was now, within the space of ten active years, a successful, wealthy merchant and shipowner, with business connections in three continents, and he had a residence at Great Ormond Street, a fashionable part of London. Furthermore, he and his associates had been able to show how the powerful and profitable monopoly, which the great East India Company had exercised against British subjects for such a long time, could be neutralized. And the firm which young Cox had helped to establish went on to grow until in course of time, under other men and the name of Jardine, Matheson & Co., it came to wield tremendous influence in British trade in Hong Kong and China.

John Henry Cox did not live long to enjoy his good fortune, for he died, of natural causes, on October 8, 1791, before the season was out. He was only 34 years of age at the time of his death, and he left a flourishing business to his friend and partner, Daniel Beale, who was joined soon after by his brother Thomas Beale. His remains were interred on Danes Island, at Whampoa, where the foreigners in South China had a cemetery, 'eastward of the bluff'.¹²¹

No record is available to give us an assessment of the extent of John Henry Cox's property, but the figure must have been considerable for he was able to offer not less than £1,000 to each of the two executors of his estate: Daniel Beale, his partner in China, and Thomas Pirkinson, a friend in England. He had not married and in the provisions of his will he provided that his estate should be invested and the revenue should be paid exclusively in three equal shares to his father, James Cox, Senior; his brother, James Cox, Junior; and his sister, Elizabeth Cox. His will was executed at London, on February 25, 1789.¹²²

The extraordinary success achieved by Cox and those who were in business with him soon induced others to follow in their footsteps. The thin edge of the wedge, by means of which John Reid had, in 1779, devised a way to find a chink in the armour of the Honourable Company in China was

¹¹⁹ That is, 9,000 tons to the Company's 2,000 tons. Cox and his associates must have employed from 20 to 30 ships to handle this volume of merchandise.

¹²⁰ These were the regular commodities of trade between India and Macao (*Gazeta de Macao*, 12, 20 March, 1824: 60).

¹²¹ H.S.S. (H. Staple Smith), *Diary of Events in Shameen* (Canton, privately printed, n.d., 1938: 59).

¹²² See Appendix. The present-day equivalent in Far Eastern values of the £1,000 paid to each of the executors might be as much as \$100,000 to \$120,000.

pushed in more firmly and by 1791 there were several honorary representatives of European sovereign governments, claiming to act on behalf of the monarchs of these states, small though some of them might have been.

Thus Mr Charles Schneider turned up in China and, when ordered to leave, showed the Company that he 'resided here in the capacity of Vice Consul for the Supreme Republic of Genoa to transact the affairs of Merchants of that State'. Mr David Reid was able to demonstrate that he held a commission 'in the service of his Danish Majesty, and', so he went on to state, 'it is in consequence of Orders from that Court that I am now here'. A Mr Dickerson, who had succeeded in arranging for naturalization as a Portuguese subject, also announced that he enjoyed 'the protection of the Court of Poland'.¹²³

These men traded at Canton during the winter months and spent each summer at Macao, where they were able to combine what would otherwise have been a period of enforced idleness with profitable interludes at Macao by engaging in trade. Their number was added to when Mr Samuel Shaw turned up in the *Empress of China*, as the representative of the newly established United States of America. He reached Macao, proceeding at once to Canton, in 1786, as the first U.S. Consul and, at the end of the trading season at Canton he applied, in April, 1787, for permission to stay at Macao during the summer months.¹²⁴

The Genesis of Jardine, Matheson & Co.

The story of the subsequent development of the firm, first organized by John Henry Cox and his associates, has been very competently sketched by M. Greenberg in his *British Trade and the Opening of China, 1800-1842*, frequently quoted here. Written after a careful study of the old records of Jardine, Matheson & Co., now kept in the Cambridge University Library, it is one of the very few on the subject yet published.¹²⁵ Maurice Collis' *Foreign Mud* is another excellent work dealing principally with the opium

¹²³ Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 206-7. These three men did not have the good fortune which favoured John Henry Cox, for their names do not figure prominently in the accounts of trade in China during the period. The subject of consuls of foreign powers in Macao has still to be studied, and as there is some material in the archives of Lisbon and Macao this should not prove a difficult matter.

¹²⁴ Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II: 150; S. Wells Williams, *The Middle Kingdom* (New York 1883); F. R. Dulles, *China and America* (Princeton 1946); J. K. Fairbank, *The United States and China* (Harvard 1948), etc.

¹²⁵ 'The scope of this study is determined by the character of the sources of information available. The main source used is the Jardine, Matheson Collection of manuscripts. They shed an intimate light, from the inside as it were, on the operations of the foreign merchants in China' (M. Greenberg, *British Trade and the Opening of China*, 1951: xi-xii). The oldest file in this collection seems to be Cox's *Invoice Book* of 1782, in the J. M. Archives, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

trade but also about the various phases and personages connected with the commercial operations of the period. It also contains some background material on the subject of the 'Country trade' between India and China at the time.¹²⁶

In 1797, Daniel Beale decided to retire and return to England. He had spent, in his youth, several years in the E.I. Company's employ in India and he had then done business on his own in China for a number of years and, after 1787, in partnership with John Henry Cox. He was now a man of considerable means, thoroughly experienced, and one of the earliest of that class of men known as 'Old China Hands'. In London he joined Francis Magniac, in the concern doing business as jewellery and general merchants, and watchmakers and exporters of 'sing-songs'. He left the business in China to his younger brother Thomas.

Two years later (in 1799) the firm in China was reorganized. Young Thomas Beale, only 20 years old, seems to have lacked the flair for business and felt the need for associates. He took Robert Hamilton, David Reid and Alexander Shank as his partners and a new concern was thus set up; it did business under the name of Hamilton and Reid and Beale.¹²⁷ The death of Hamilton in the same year led to further changes and in 1800 Reid & Beale emerged. Its partners were David Reid, Thomas Beale and Alexander Shank, with a working capital of \$120,000, in three equal shares.¹²⁸

A more active demand for 'sing-songs' having set in, Charles Magniac, son of Francis Magniac of the old shop in Clerkenwell, very probably at the suggestion of Daniel Beale, was sent from London in 1801 to join the firm of Reid, Beale & Co. at Canton. Reid withdrew later in the same year and returned to England. A further change was then made and it was as Beale & Magniac that the firm came to be known, in 1803, with Beale, Shank and Magniac

¹²⁶ Other books which touch upon the subject are: W. Milburn, *Oriental Commerce* (London 1813); C. Toogood Downing, *The Fan-Qui or Foreigner in China* (London 1838); W. S. Lindsay, *History of British Shipping* (London 1876); W. H. Carey, *The Good Old Days of Honourable John Company* (London 1906-07); J. B. Eames, *The English in China* (London 1909); W. H. Coates, *The Old 'Country Trade' of the East Indies* (London 1911); F. P. Robinson, *The Trade of the East India Company (1700-1813)* (London 1912); Bal Krishna, *Commercial Relations between India and England (1601-1757)* (London 1924); V. Anstey, *The Trade of the Indian Ocean* (London 1929); A. Redford, *Manchester Merchants and Foreign Trade (1794-1858)* (London 1934); C. N. Parkinson, *Trade in the Eastern Seas* (Cambridge 1937).

¹²⁷ There is nothing to show if David Reid, who arrived at Macao in 1793, was connected with the John Reid who had been an earlier partner but who went bankrupt in 1787. Robert Hamilton had come from Calcutta but not having secured an appointment as the representative of any European Court was not able to reside at Macao; he had to return to India in one of the ships that sailed in March or April each year. Alexander Shank was "a free mariner" who, being without papers from a European state, was obliged to make the best way out . . . by short absences from China, mostly in Malacca'. He remained with the concern until his death in 1819.

¹²⁸ Greenberg, *British Trade*, 1951: 27, 83 and 222.

as partners, doing business as general traders but not forgetting 'sing-songs' and clocks and watches.

Business in China continued to improve and the new company did so well that in 1811 it was decided to take on a new partner. He was Francis Hollingworth Magniac, younger brother of Charles. The increase in trade, which had been in evidence for several years, showed no signs of abating, and the records of the East India Company give some particulars of its growth, mainly in opium and raw cotton from India but also in other products from that country, including indigo.¹²⁹ True to their old line, however, the partners of Beale & Magniac went on doing business in clocks, watches and 'sing-songs', since several of the partners and their assistants, at one time or another, were watch-makers and lapidaries. Under efficient management the firm's business between India and China kept expanding and the keen competition with which the 'Country merchants', as the Committee continued to call them, had already plagued the East India Company for several years, soon intensified.

Opium figured to an ever greater extent in the trade carried on, with correspondingly large profits for those selling it. Since the East India Company did not carry opium in its own ships but sold the drug in India to merchants who sent it to China, the 'Country merchants' obtained large sums of silver, from its sale to Chinese dealers, depositing the same in the Company's treasury at Canton in exchange for the Company's bills on London. The Company continued to finance its purchases of tea and other Chinese merchandise to a great extent from this silver.¹³⁰

Thomas Beale was not cut out to be a merchant. It seems that he had been engaging, on the side, for several years, in business between Calcutta and Macao in conjunction with the prominent Macao merchant, Senhor Januário Agostinho de Almeida, Baron San José do Porto Alegre, and his son-in-law, the Chief Justice, Senhor Miguel de Arriaga Brum da Silveira, who failed to the extent of nearly two million dollars. Thomas Beale's dealings with these gentlemen were not connected with the business of Beale & Magniac but were his own private affair. His personal commitments had become so involved that he had to declare bankruptcy; in their insolvency Arriaga and Almeida had dragged Beale down with them.

The Select Committee of the English E. I. Company had been very accommodating to Thomas Beale, which serves to explain how he had got so deeply involved, but when they found out the true position their reports to the Directors in London were very critical of Senhor Arriaga, who as the Judge had no right to engage in trade and whose incursion into business had

¹²⁹ H. B. Morse, *Chronicles of the E. I. Company*, Vol.

¹³⁰ Morse refers frequently, in the *Chronicles*, to instances of silver imported in private trade and turned over to the Company (cf. Vol. II: 313, 322, 388, to give three cases).

proved so disastrous to Thomas Beale. According to them the total owed by Arriaga exceeded 1,780,000 dollars, not counting the interest.¹³¹ Part of this money was represented by cargoes of opium, at inflated prices, as collateral, and after all the stocks had been sold the balance owing was still considerable. Beale made attempts to pay off his indebtedness and entertained hopes of recovering substantial sums from the Baron and the Judge, but the deaths of these two within a few months of each other in 1825 and 1824, respectively, led to the Company's decision to close the account with the sum of over two hundred thousand dollars unpaid.¹³²

The firm of Beals & Magniac was wound up and a new concern known as Shank & Magniac emerged but, owing to the death of Alexander Shank two years later the firm was reorganized in 1819 as Charles Magniac & Co., with Charles Magniac and his brother Francis Hollingworth as the sole partners. They were joined by their younger brother Daniel who arrived from London in 1823.¹³³

About this time two very interesting figures came on the stage: William Jardine and James Matheson. They were exceptionally able, shrewd and far-sighted men, pursuing their trade with the greatest sagacity and judgment. The successful results of their activities produced a clearly defined impact on the trade in this part of the world and, after a decade or so, on even the policy adopted by the British Government in its dealings with China.

¹³¹ Montalto de Jesus sets the figure at between three and four million dollars! He tries to find some justification for the judge, but he is not on good ground for the equivalent of the debts mentioned, in present-day terms, would amount to a very large sum, possibly as much as \$50,000,000! Quite inexperienced in business he must have plunged recklessly into speculation while living a life of fantastic extravagance. This phase of the private trade does not seem to have merited the attention of historians. According to Montalto, Francisco José de Paiva, a Portuguese contemporary and merchant at Macao, wrote a scathing attack on Senhor Arriaga, publishing it in the Macao newspaper (*A Abelha da China*) on November 14th, 1822. The present writer has not seen a copy of this number of the old journal. (See C. A. Montalto de Jesus, *Historic Macao*, 1926: 274-5; Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. III: 248-50, 326-7, 340; Vol. IV: 97 *passim*.)

¹³² In spite of this set-back Thomas Beale continued doing business on his own, hoping to be able to pay off his indebtedness to the E. I. Company and other creditors. He seems to have managed to keep on his feet and in course of time he was able to engage in the interesting pastime of keeping an aviary and flower garden. Eventually the cage grew to be an enormous affair, 50 feet high, with a wide variety of birds from many places. The plants collected by him were set out in 'upwards of 2,500 pots, probably the richest collection of Chinese flowers ever made by any foreigner—serving in fact as the nursery in which some of the rarest productions of China have been prepared for transmission to the west'. Several botanists in Europe drew upon this gentleman for their specimens, and even Kew Gardens received quite a number of cuttings from Thomas Beale's garden. His interest extended to the recording of rain at Macao, and 'a table giving the average of rain in the mean of its fall at Macao during 16 years, furnished by Mr Beale' was published (*Chinese Repository*, Vol. I: 491; *Bennett's Wanderings*, Vol. II: 50; J. F. Davis, *The Chinese*, Vol. II: 318).

Thomas Beale died at Macao in tragic circumstances in December, 1841 (*Chinese Repository*, Vol. XI: 59).

¹³³ Greenberg, *British Trade*, 1951: 222.

We first hear of Jardine as a surgeon in an East Indiaman (1802). Fourteen years later he gave up the practice of medicine to adopt the calling of a merchant in London. In 1819 he sailed for the East, representing a London friend and a Parsi merchant of Bombay named Framjee Cowasjee, while co-operating with Charles Magniac & Co. in Macao and South China, in the opium trade. He was not content to follow the pattern which had become stereotyped among the 'Country merchants' but, in collaboration with his Chinese connections, principally the great Hong merchant Howqua (Wu Hao-kuan),¹³⁴ he began looking for new trades and ways of improving the old. His successes helped to bring about, with the help of his London connections, great changes in the China trade.

James Matheson, or Nicholas James Sutherland Matheson to give him his full name, joined the firm of Mackintosh & Co., at Calcutta, when only seventeen years of age, in 1813. Three years later he decided to go into business with Robert Taylor. The latter died however in 1820 and he joined the Spanish firm of Yrissari & Co., of Manila, as a partner, while securing the representation of Denmark in China. He soon displayed the qualities of the good business man that he was, pursuing his business with energy and remarkable foresight. At a time when there was no competition to speak of, he was one of the pioneers in exploiting trade along the China Coast, and in this he was extraordinarily successful.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ *Howqua* or *Houqua* 浩官 was the name given by the foreign merchants in Canton, in pidgin English, to the firm first established at Canton by Wu Kuo-ying 伍國榮, about 1777. His third son, Wu Ping-chün 伍秉鈞 succeeded to the firm, which had been styled in Chinese as *Ewo* 怡和, and built it up into an astonishingly profitable business. He retired from active participation in the concern (1826), being succeeded by his son Wu Yüan-hua 伍元華. In spite of heavy exactions by the mandarin and compulsory contributions to the Imperial Government and Court, Wu Ping-chün's fortune was estimated in 1834 at £4,500,000. The name *Howqua* 浩官 was also used by the foreigners to identify Wu Ping-chün himself and, later, his son Wu Yüan-hua.

Messrs Jardine, Matheson & Co. adopted the name *Ewo* as the Chinese appellation of their firm.

See *Eminent Chinese of the Ching Period*, edited by A. W. Hummel (Washington 1944: 877, 867-868) and the sources quoted. See also the *Chinese Repository* where it is stated that 'the original name' was Wu How Kuan 伍浩官.

The suffix *qua*, in pidgin English, in this and other well known examples is honorific. It stands for *kuan* 官 (an official), the Fukienese pronunciation of which would sound something like *qua*. This form was first used by the Portuguese when speaking of Chinese gentlemen already in the 17th century, and it is very likely that Portuguese interpreters introduced it to the early English traders, who retained it until the middle of the 19th century. See S. Couling, *The Encyclopaedia Sinica*, 1917: 240 and *Register of the Proceedings of Councils of the Macao Senate*, Register No. 2, ff. 44.

¹³⁵ A succinct account of the careers of these two gentlemen has been given by Maurice Collis, *Foreign Mud* (London 1946), and Michael Greenberg, *British Trade and the Opening of China, 1800-42*.

Of the many British merchants who did well at Macao only one seems to have given a thought to the hospitality received. This one was James Matheson, and when 'about to leave China after a residence of many years gave Governor Pinto of Macao \$5,000, to be put to some permanent

In 1824 Charles Magniac retired from the firm of Charles Magniac & Co., going home to England, and a year later William Jardine, who was 41 years old at the time, joined the Magniacs as a partner. In 1827, Matheson decided to dissolve his partnership with Yrissari, being joined by his brother Alexander in his own firm of Matheson & Co. Later in the same year, Francis Hollingworth Magniac decided to return to England but before doing so he admitted James Matheson as a partner.¹³⁶ Although withdrawing from active participation in the Company's activities he remained a silent partner, and he set himself up as a merchant banker in London, where he came to wield considerable influence in financial circles in the City. His remarkable collection of Chinese curios was believed to be one of the finest in Britain.¹³⁷ The partners continued to trade under the name of Magniac & Co.

Daniel Magniac was asked to leave the firm in 1826, as he had committed the unpardonable sin of marrying a local girl.¹³⁸ He died at Macao soon afterwards and was buried in the English Cemetery.¹³⁹

The two senior partners in China, William Jardine and James Matheson, embarked upon new policies as their business expanded. Not the least important of these were the building of faster vessels for the trade between India and China and the setting up of strongly armed depot ships for opium on Lintin Island, from which cargoes could be sent to places along the China Coast all through the year. They decided, also, in 1832 to rename the firm, calling it Jardine, Matheson & Co., a name which has survived to the present day. Under the efficient management and progressive policies of these competent, resourceful businessmen and their equally able successors, the firm went on to build itself up into a remarkably successful concern, which took its place as one of the leaders of British enterprise and initiative in the Far East, a place it has held to the present day.

Before many years, the firm was able to take an active and notable part in the development of Hong Kong, when the British colony was established, and likewise at Shanghai and other places in China. Its contributions to the early phases of the spread of Western ideas, principally in trade and industry, at a time when the energies of the Chinese people were slowly introduced to Western commercial and manufacturing activities were considerable.

purpose of public benevolence, as a testimony of his grateful sense of the protection afforded him and others by the Macao government'. This sum formed the nucleus of a public subscription which was applied to the setting up of a school, which, under another name, still survives at Macao (*Chinese Repository*, 11, 181; Leoncio A. Ferreira, *Um brado pela verdade*, Macao 1872: 6; J. M. Braga, *Hong Kong and Macao*, Hong Kong 1960: 58).

¹³⁶ Greenberg, *British Trade*, p. 223.

¹³⁷ See the catalogue issued at the time of the auction of some of these curios, in 1892.

¹³⁸ See Note 52 *supra*.

¹³⁹ Daniel Magniac died on January 4, 1827, aged 29 years (See J. M. Braga, *Tombstones in the English Cemeteries at Macao*, Macao 1940: 23).

In the summing up of what the Western peoples have done for China, principally in the material sense, the firm stands high among Western entrepreneurs, as a pioneer in trade, while it has been actively connected with shipping, insurance, industrial undertakings and other commercial activities.

The firm had its roots in the enterprise first inaugurated nearly two hundred years ago, when John Henry Cox first essayed to trade as an independent merchant at Macao and Canton in the year 1781.

The reference to the activities of John Henry Cox and his successors, and the great change they brought about in the sphere of commerce in this part of the world has been outlined very sketchily above but who will say that it is not a fascinating story of how a humble seller of 'sing-songs' helped to give impetus to a new movement and contributed not a little to the spread of those notions of free trade which took hold of the consciousness of an industrialized Britain and, in course of time, to an awakening East? It is not in the least likely that young Cox ever gave a thought to the fact that he was an important pioneer in a new phase in British and Western commercial enterprise, but great things developed from that small beginning and his name deserves well of those who are interested in an important phase of business expansion in China.

Histories of this period have given little space to the importance and value of the help rendered to so many foreigners by Macao, for writers on this subject have gone exclusively to accounts by writers using British source material. In the present study, however, several Portuguese documents have been quoted, helping to shed a little light on some obscure points. Further search for source material will probably reveal more information of the same, or even more interesting, nature, from Portuguese or other sources, to add to the little that has already been written on a subject about which there is still much to learn.

A Portuguese would like to feel that it might not be forgotten that if there had been no Macao or that if the community there had been less accommodating, although admittedly the Portuguese received benefits from the presence of the foreigners, neither John Henry Cox nor any other of the 'interlopers' who contributed to break the E. I. Company's monopoly, on behalf of the free-trade movement in Britain, would ever have had the opportunity of accomplishing what they did.

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APPENDIX

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF JOHN HENRY COX

I, John Henry Cox, now of Great Ormond Street, Queen Square, do make my last will and testament to the effect following and do appoint Mr. Thomas Pirkinson of Bodworth Clou Mills and Mr. Daniel Beale of Canton in China to be my Executors and I do give them One Thousand Pounds each, all the rest and residue of my property of what nature soever I do give to my Executors in Trust that they do after payment of all my lawful debts invest the sole remainder of the funds and apply the whole Annual [indecipherable] of such property as follows, *viz.*, one-third thereof to Mr. James Cox Senior of Shoe Lane, one-third to Mr. James Cox Jun'r of Shoe Lane, and one-third to Miss Elizabeth Cox my sister, and after the death of the said Mr. James Cox Sen'r I do give and bequeath his one-third of the produce of my property to my god son Thomas Gustavus Pirkinson for ever and in case of the death of either Mr. James Cox Jun'r or Miss Elizabeth Cox without issue the survivor to have and hold the other's third, but in case of such first dying leaving Issue then the said Issue to continue to enjoy the (1/3) of his parent and in case of the last survivor dying without Issue his portion to go to the Issue of the other But in case of such last survivor having Issue then his or her portion to devolve to such Issue and that the Executors if they Judge proper may deliver over their Charge of this property to the rightful Heirs and in the case of the death of all three of the above mentioned parties, *viz.*, Mr. James Cox Sen'r Mr. James Cox Jun'r and Miss Elizabeth Cox without Issue then the two remaining thirds to go to as follows one-third to Mr. Daniel Beale and one-third to Mr. Thomas Cox of Winchester Street or the Heirs of his Body in equal shares and as the distance between England and China makes it inconvenient and almost impossible for the Executors to consult each other it is necessary and I do hereby authorize them to act separately and independently of each other as long as they may be so separated, *John Henry Cox*. Signed sealed and published and delivered by the above named Testator to be his last Will and Testament in the presence of Us who in his presence and in the presence of each other and at his request have hereunto subscribed our Names as Witnesses. Thos. Lodington Lambs Condt St. Robert Barnby Clk to Mr. Lodington. London, February 25, 1789.

Proved in London 5th April 1792 by the oath of Thomas Pirkinson.
Proved in London, 9th June 1798 by the oath of Daniel Beale.



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